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Edited by
Th. Dombal and N. L. Mecheriakov

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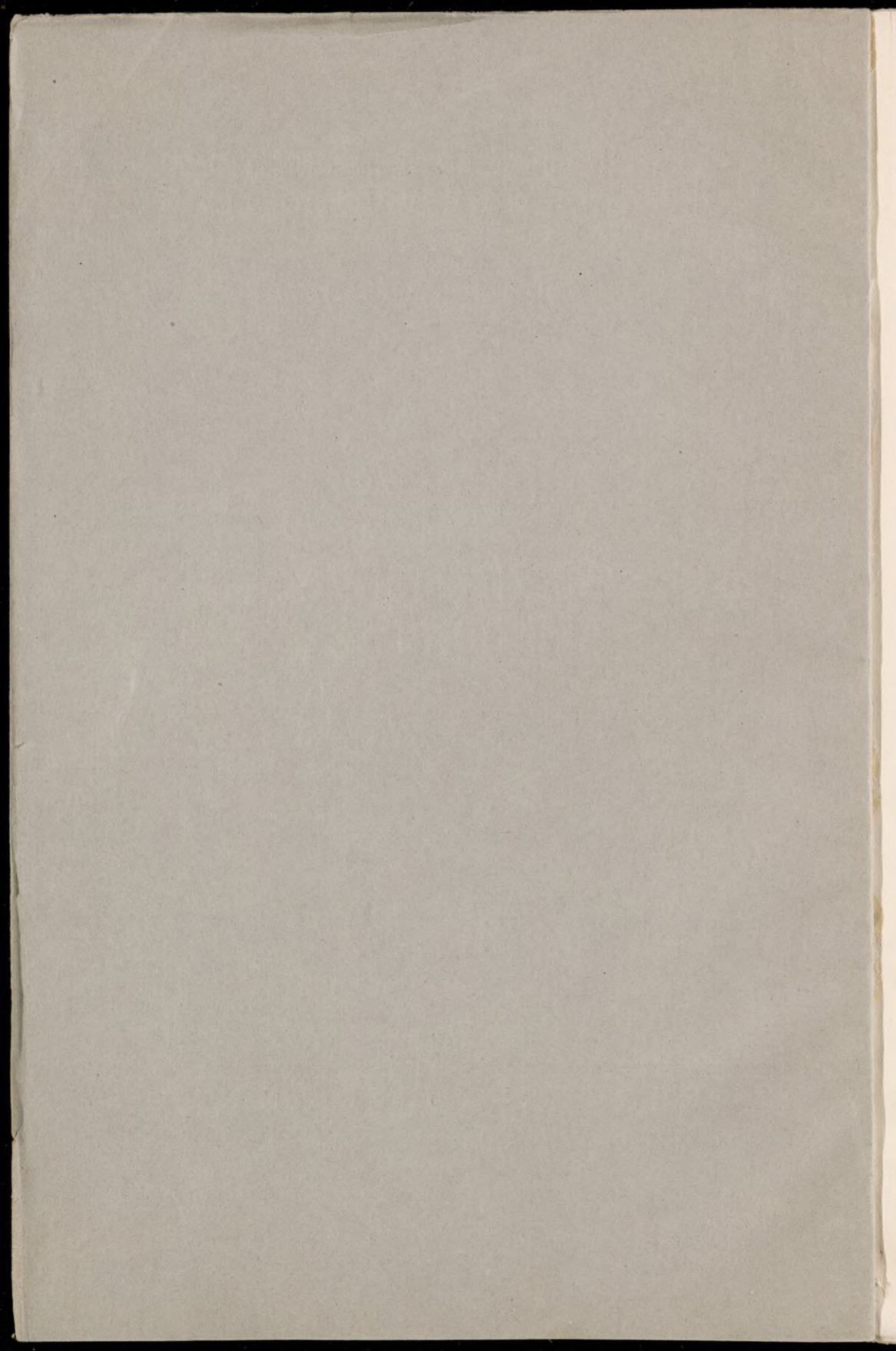
S. DINGLEY
THE PEASANTS' MOVEMENT
in INDONESIA

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R. L. PRAGER



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PREFACE.

We are living amid a worldwide movement of Social Revolution that is made up of the individual revolutionary movements of the different countries. The degree of development reached by the latter determines the pace of the World Revolution. These revolutionary upheavals, succeeding each other with a certain amount of sequence, and at certain intervals of time, constitute a continuous chain of events. The World Social Revolution, having started upon the territory of the former Russian Empire in October 1917, coincided in time with a series of democratic revolutions in the colonial and semicolonial countries oppressed by imperialism. The basis of the revolution in these countries in its first stage is the abolition of the lingering semi-feudal traditions. Consequently, a great part is played here by the peasantry which constitutes approximately 60—80 % of the population.

The World War, and its accompanying disturbance of the entire capitalist system, has served as an impetus to a wave of peasant upheavals in nearly all the Eastern countries. Since 1918 the movement was started in Japan, China, India, Indonesia, and in the other Eastern countries. In China, the peasant movement represents one of the basic factors of the steadily developing Revolution in that country.

The development of capitalism, having succeeded in imposing the domination of financial capital, has further enhanced the enslavement of the colonial and semi-colonial countries whose population, as we have said, overwhelmingly consists of peasants, and the revolutionary movement among the peasant masses in those countries, directed against the system of exploitation enforced by imperialism, inevitably forms part and parcel of the common international struggle waged by the proletariat against imperialism.

The Chinese Revolution, which is draving the widest masses of the toiling peasantry into the active struggle against imperialism, is paving the way for the peasant emancipation movement in the East and in the colonies.

Owing to the development of imperialism, the class antagonisms become accentuated to such an extent that we are unquestionably on the eve of peasant risings and wars in the colonies and semi-colonies. The fundamental difference between these peasant revolutions and the medieval peasant wars in Europe, or the peasant insurrections which accompanied the period of bourgeois revolutions in Europe, consists in that they will be taking place at the dusk of world capitalism, when the existence of profound antagonisms will be further aggravated by the attempts at temporary stabilisation of capitalism, and the toiling peasantry in the colonies and semi-colonies, which is getting ready for the fray, has a faithful ally not only in the nascent working class of those countries, but also in the world's proletariat and in the revolutionary peasantry of the other countries.

One of the colonies, in which the beginning of the peasant revolution can already be observed, is Indonesia. It is a country of 50 million inhabitants, consisting of a group of islands situated on the Pacific ocean, where the interests of the three largest imperialist Powers — the United States of America, Great Britain and Japan — come into collision; hence Indonesia will no doubt represent one of the most important battlegrounds in a future conflagration.

The little book which we submit to the reader has been written by Mr. S. Dingley, an Indonesian citizen who has taken a very active part in the work of the Farmers' International. This popular narrative will give the attentive reader a fairly minute insight into the complex situation in which the struggle of the oppressed Indonesian peasants against the imperialist invaders is developing.

The reader will see in it how the growth of imperialism in the colonial and semi-colonial countries entails the gradual disintegration of the indigenous, semi-natural, patriarchal traditions. At the same time he will see how imperialism, not only impresses into its service the old precapitalistic economic and social institutions, as aids to its policy of domination and plunder, but also imposes upon those countries "new" feudal methods in the shape of compulsory service to the landowners, such as „Heerendienst“ etc.

Under severe and precarious conditions, under unparalleled and cruel exploitation of the natives by the „civilised“ invaders, the oppressed masses of the people in Indonesia are being aroused to national consciousness, and to a revolutionary class-movement for emancipation. As the struggle goes on, new forms are being worked out for the organisation of the peasant masses, and the ties are strengthened with the other native classes, elements and groups, in a struggle against the common foe — imperialism.

The religious, educational, economic and other organisations if they do not care to lose the confidence of the masses of the people, must perforce take up the path of revolution; they must join the general stream, i. e. the struggle for national emancipation.

Under such circumstances the influence of the most revolutionary organisation of Indonesia — the Indonesian Communist Party — has tremen — dously grown, and will continue to grow.

Whilst taking these objective facts into consideration, it should, however, be pointed out that the Communist Party of Indonesia seems to lack the proper tactics in regard to the revolutionary movement of the peasantry, such as would correspond to the pace and character of the movement. Here we find such manifestations of ultra-revolutionary tactics and strategy as the policy of „automatic dying out“ of a mass-organisation of peasants, of driving a revolutionary mass-organisation of peasants underground, of its identification with the Communist movement, and so on, which lead the movement to premature anardistic outbursts, etc. — The Communist Party, although enjoying great confidence among the masses, has not yet realised its own tasks in the forthcoming struggle, i. e. it has failed to realise that it has to deal with a democratic peasant revolution which may serve as the basis of a national revolution, in which the Communist Party should be at the head, and should therefore rally all the local anti-imperialistic elements, and guide them. Hence the deviation exclusively in the direction of economic organisation of the peasantry, while the revolutionary struggle of the peasantry goes on unceasingly, constitutes a very grave blunder.

This causes the dissipation of the forces of the revolutionary movement. Along with Sarikat Raiat, there are growing up other organisations of the same type and, what is particularly important, the ground is being prepared for the penetration of semi-opportunistic organisations, and the leadership of the movement of the peasant masses gets partly out of the grip of the revolutionary proletarian organisations and shifted into entirely unreliable hands. The Author himself, whilst criticising these tactics and strategy and the conduct of his comrades in arms in his „Survey of the different political, religious and educational organisations“, expresses the belief that „only the increased governmental terror might increase the influence of the vacillating elements among the peasant masses.“

Moreover, in his „Summary and Outlook“, the Author suggests something like a transition of the revolutionary proletarian and peasant masses into the fold of the semi-opportunistic „social organisation“ of Budi-Utomo, expecting by such simplified methods to solve the

problem of forming a party to take the lead in the national-revolutionary struggle. All the problems touched upon by the Author in his „Outlook“ are no doubt more complex and difficult than he takes them to be.

The question of creating a mass-organisation of the Indonesian peasants as a component part of the national revolutionary organisation, and the question of the leadership of such an organisation by the revolutionary elements, are the cardinal questions in the struggle of the Indonesian peasants for emancipation. Although the Author does not furnish lucid answers to these questions, he nevertheless states them quite fully.

Interesting is also the manner in which the Author handles the question of the ever-growing role of the co-operative organisations in the intensification of the revolutionary struggle of the enslaved masses of the colonies.

The Editors of this publication, while pointing out the defects in the leadership of the growing peasant revolution in Indonesia, at the same time feel sure that in the very near future the revolutionary elements of Indonesia will find the proper ways towards consolidating the peasant revolution of Indonesia with the national revolutionary movement of that country, as a component part of the World Social Revolution.

In publishing this extremely interesting little book by Mr. S. Dingley, it is the hope of the Editors that it might contribute to a speedy solution of this important problem, so as to strengthen the fight of the oppressed toiling masses of Indonesia for liberation, and to hasten their victory.

The Editors.

CHAPTER ONE.

INTRODUCTION.

I was asked by Krestintern to write a review on the peasant movement in Indonesia. This shows that the Red Farmers' International fully realises the importance of the peasants' struggle in this part of the Far East at the present moment.

Indeed, the general awakening of the oppressed peasantry has also affected that of Indonesia, whose struggle has now become more conscious and acute than before. While Indonesia represents the convergence of the roads between the West and the Far East, the centre of gravity of the rivalry between the capitalist states is now being shifted, apparently, more and more to the Far East. This assumption is borne out by the creation of a British naval base at Singapore and by the latest events in China.

The peasantry of Indonesia, as we shall presently see, constitutes an object of particular attention for two of the most powerful capitalist groups: British and American capital. The „Rubber War“ between these two groups of capitalists is being unfolded chiefly in Indonesia; here is also the ground where the interests of the other capitalists groups come into collision. Therefore the struggle of the Indonesian peasants, who will probably be drawn into the slaughter that is being prepared for by the international bourgeoisie, undoubtedly merits the attention of the revolutionary peasantry of all countries.

In order to facilitate an understanding of the course of events to be further described, we shall begin with a brief review of the general situation of the country and a short history of the struggle of the peasant masses in Indonesia.

We hope that this little book will serve the cause of solidarity among the peasants throughout the world in their struggle against their common oppressors, in their struggle against imperialist wars.

1) A General Survey of the Indonesian Situation.

Situated in the Far East, furnishing a sort of bridge between Asia and Australia, and dominating the waterways between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, Indonesia occupies a highly important geographical position. It is a Dutch colony, but since the Dutch government has established the so-called „open door“ policy in 1905, the other capitalist powers are at present interested in Indonesia, too. Although, owing to a lack of exhaustive statistical data concerning these Dutch possessions, it is impossible to state in figures the growth and the

extent of foreign capital invested in Indonesia; nevertheless it is tolerably certain that Dutch and British capital occupy a predominant position here, particularly in big agriculture and industry. According to data furnished by Dr. Helfrich (a representative of German capital in Indonesia) and published in „Oekonomisch-Statistische Berichten“ for 1925, Dutch and British capital in Indonesia constitutes about 90% of all the capital invested in big agriculture undertakings. With regard to the petroleum industry, which constitutes Indonesia's chief item of export, a predominant position is occupied by the Royal Dutch Shell Company (an Anglo-Dutch concern).

On the other hand, in regard to trade, export and import, as well as marine transportation, Japan and the United States of America have been steadily gaining in importance since the beginning of the world war. They have now occupied the important position that was held in this respect by Germany before the war, and have partly even put out of business the British and Dutch trading firms in the above mentioned lines. An important factor is also played by Chinese capital, mostly owned by Chinese settlers in Indonesia. The native bourgeoisie is very weak. It does not take part in big trade and industry, and only in recent years it has begun to gain its way into the big rubber industry. As regards the brokerage business, it is mostly in the hands of Chinese and Arabs.

In order to show the important part played by Indonesia in the world's trade, and the extent to which the imperialist powers are interested in the exploitation of the country, we give below the leading export figures, based on statistics for 1924:

Export Articles	Value in Million Florins	%/o to total exports
Sugar	491.1	32.1
Rubber	202.6	13.2
Petroleum	158.3	10.3
Tobacco	123.6	8.1
Cocoa	97.4	6.4
Tea	93.1	6.1
Coffee	65.6	4.3
	1,231.7	80.5

We thus see that nearly all the leading articles of export are agricultural products. These are raised not only upon large capitalist plantations, but also on the humble fields of the peasants, — particularly rubber. The production of the latter has been particularly developed by the Indonesian peasants. According to data by the Central Statistical Bureau of Indonesia, the rubber output of the peasants has increased in 1925 as compared with 1924 by 50% (56,346 net tons in 1924, and 84,000 net tons in 1925), while on the large plantations the output has increased only by 15% (90,291 net tons in 1924, and 104,000 net tons in 1925). At the same time the jump in price on rubber in 1925 raised

its economic importance nearly to that of sugar, which was for a number of years the chief product of Indonesia. Its further growth is anticipated.

In view of these facts it is quite clear why American and British capitalists have lately been devoting increasing attention to the Indonesian peasants. The Rubber War is operating chiefly in Indonesia. American capitalists, eager to smash the rubber monopoly of the British capitalists (London and Liverpool are the world's centres of the rubber trade), are striving by might and main to penetrate into the rubber production in Indonesia. The Indonesian peasants have to bear the brunt of this economic rivalry between the imperialist powers.

The territory of Indonesia comprises Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, New Guinea, Timora, and a number of small islands. To give an idea of its large dimensions, its territory would extend from the Western border of Ireland to the Western coast of the Black Sea, and from the Southern limits of Italy to the Northernmost point of Norway. Indonesia is scattered over a space of 1,900,151 square kilometers. It is a tropical mountain-country, exceedingly fertile and rich in minerals of various kinds. According to the last census, it has a population of over 50,000,000 people, 70% of whom are poor and middle peasants.¹⁾

The most important island is Java, the sugar country. Although it occupies a territory of only 131,440 sq. kilometers (four times the size of its mother country), it is of greater importance than the larger islands of Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes and New Guinea; because Java is the most populated, cultivated and industrialised island. In 1922 it had a population of over 35 million people, 55% of whom were poor and middle peasants.

The population of Java increases every year, having in 1920 reached an average of 262 people to the square kilometer. In the province of Kedu in 1922 the density of the population was as high as 443 people to the sq. kilometer. Thus, the island of Java by its density exceeds the most industrialised countries of Europe, e. g. Germany, although Java is an agricultural country inhabited by peasants of small means. No wonder that these peasants are very poor, and that tens of thousands of peasants and labourers annually emigrate from the island in search of new places where they might gain a livelihood. Many of them go to Sumatra, to Borneo, to Malacca, Surinam (a Dutch colony in Guiana, South America), and finally, to New Caledonia (an island on the Pacific).

Very important is also Sumatra, described in Indonesia as „the country of the future“. Its territory is nearly equal to that of Germany, having a stretch of 420,000 sq. kilometers, and its population in 1920 was 6,500,000. It is the island of rubber and tobacco. The majority of its population comprise the poor and middle peasants, while in some of the industrial centres there are tens of thousands of workers employed in the rubber and tobacco factories, in the petroleum industry, and in the coal and tin mines.

1) Including 15% of seasonal plantation workers.

Sumatra is the „country of the future“ for the capitalists of Indonesia, because it abounds in unexploited natural wealth, and labour-power is more obtainable than upon the other islands, e. g. Borneo and New Guinea. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the great progress of industrialisation in Indonesia, particularly in Java, Indonesia will probably remain an agricultural country for many years to come, and the peasants will continue to play an important part in the economic life of the country.

The Dutch imperialists have imposed upon Indonesia a government which relies upon a huge army of officials and upon petty native rulers, who are in reality its servants. Most of the higher officials are native feudal rulers. Thus, the Indonesian peasants (to this subject we shall yet return later on) are suffering under the yoke of double exploitation: by the new bourgeoisie and the feudal rulers.

2) The History of the Peasant Movement, and its Causes.

In reading most of the bourgeois textbooks on Eastern history, one would gain the impression as though culture and civilisation had been brought to Indonesia by the Dutch. This is one of the methods of hoodwinking the people, in order to win its loyalty.

But from other historians, like Dr. Helmond and others, we learn that nearly twelve centuries prior to the appearance of Western merchants, i. e. in the 4th century, there had existed in Indonesia an ordered „State“, where the peasants tilled the land and were „systematically“ exploited by the feudal rulers.

The information given by bourgeois historians throws little light on the social relations and the conditions of the peasantry; chief attention is given to the feudal rulers and their wars. Therefore, without going into detail, we shall give here a brief historical survey of the movement of the Indonesian peasants, relying exclusively upon verified facts and information.

At the close of the 4th century the Hindoos came to Java, bringing with them the religion of Brahmanism. In the year 500 there had existed in Java the Matoram kingdom which extended nearly over the whole island. Brahmanism had strictly divided the people into 4 castes: Brahmans (clergy), Kastrija (aristocrats and warriors), Sudra (peasants and tradesmen), and finally Pariahs (slaves and outcasts). The last two castes were oppressed and exploited by the first two.

The land constituted the property of the King and of the feudal rulers, while the peasants enjoyed only the right of cultivating it (constituting a kind of tenant farmers). They had to pay various taxes, as well as to perform compulsory labour for their feudal rulers.

In addition to all this, they were at the mercy of their rulers' caprices. Amongst others, the so-called *Jus prima noctis* provided the feudal ruler with the right of spending the first night with the bride of any of his subjects. Before giving his daughter into marriage, the peasant father had to show her first to the ruler, so that the latter could exercise his right if he desired. This „law of the first night“ is still in existence in some districts in Djobjakart and Surakart in Java. There the native rulers are still entitled to their right, although they lately dare not enforce it, evidently fearing the people's discontent.

The peasants had also suffered from the numerous wars between the feudal rulers. Their wives and children had been subjected to violence of every kind, their fields trodden down, their houses burnt, and themselves either slain or sold into slavery.

The peasants were forced to build temples for their rulers. The temples of Brobudur (erected in 850), Prambanu, Singosari etc., situated in various districts of Java, had cost the lives of tens of thousands of peasants and slaves.

The religious wars between Buddhists and Brahmanists, which had flared up in India, spread later on to Java. The oppressed classes, the peasants and the slaves, sided with the Buddhists whose religion was somewhat more democratic than that of Brahmanism in that it denied the division of people into castes. Thanks to this support, the Buddhists triumphed, and the Buddhist kingdom of Modjopakhit was founded, the ruins of whose capital city are situated in the province of Turibaia. The condition of the Javanese peasants somewhat improved, because the mighty Emperors of Modjapakhit had dealt severely with the feudal rulers who rebelled against them, and thus a period of tranquility ensued upon the whole island. Later on the Modjapakhit Emperors waged frequent wars against the rulers of the other Indonesian islands, and having subdued nearly the whole of Indonesia, they carried on wars against the kingdoms of Djokhor (situated on the Malacca peninsula) and Kambodj (in Indo-China), as well as against the Chinese Empire.

Those wars inflicted great sufferings upon the Javanese peasants. The burdens of taxation had been steadily growing. Rebellious feudal rulers, and subsequently the Chinese army, landed upon the island and devastated the Eastern portion of Java. A chance for the oppressed classes to wreak vengeance on the exploiters presented itself when the religious wars broke out between the Mohammedans and the Buddhists.

In the 12th century some Arabian merchants arrived in Sumatra and Java, who began to preach the Mohammedan religion. The religion of Islam gained a widespread following in spite of persecution on the part of the Modjapakhit Emperors, apparently because it was expressly opposed to the division of people into castes.¹⁾ This religion soon won the hearts of the oppressed people. In the beginning of the 14th century the rulers of Padjong (on the northern extremity of Java) and Palembang (in Sumatra) rebelled against their Modjapakhit sovereign, Brovidjodjo. Supported by Mohammedan peasants, who had risen in several districts in Java, they won several battles, and finally destroyed the Modjapakhit capital. The Buddhist rulers, chased from the island of Java, had eventually settled upon the island of Bali (east of Java), where the population professes the Buddhist faith to this day. But after this victory, a bitter war broke out between the Mohammedan kings and the Mohammedan feudal rulers for supremacy in Indonesia. That war continued, with brief intervals, for two centuries, until the arrival of the Western merchants. The latter employed great cunning and treachery in fanning the flame of jealousy between the rulers. They lent their aid now to one, then

1) Thus, according to the law of Islam, all people are equal at worship in the Mosque, there being no division of worshippers into „privileged and paupers“.

to another party in the war, each time securing territorial compensation. Such manoeuvring eventually secured them a powerful and predominant position in the country.

That marked the advent of a new period, the characteristic feature of which was that the Indonesian peasants were now exploited by the Western capitalists as well as the native feudal rulers. It began with the appearance of the Portuguese and Spaniards at the close of the 16th century. Soon the British and the Dutch followed, who divided the country into spheres of influence. The Dutch seized Indonesia, while the British were engaged in subjecting India and the Malacca peninsula.

The Portuguese and Spaniards were gradually ousted from Indonesia by their powerful rival. At the present time the Portuguese possess only the Northern portion of the island of Timora (situated in the eastern part of Indonesia), while the Spaniards held the Philippine islands until 1898, when they were driven out by the Americans (of the United States).

We have already mentioned how the Dutch had conquered Indonesia. They had widely employed the tactics of Machiavelli, based on „divide and govern“. Moreover, possessing firearms, they were better armed than the Indonesians. However, it took them many years to subdue the country, since it was only in 1874 that they finally defeated the ruler of Atjeh (in the northern part of Sumatra).

What were the methods employed by the Dutch bourgeoisie for the exploitation of the peasant masses of Indonesia?

In 1602 the Dutch capitalists formed the so-called „Ost India Company“ for trading in the products of the „East Indies“ (Indonesia). The Company procured from the Dutch government the rights of monopoly in the Indonesian trade, as well as the right to maintain an army. Thus the Dutch merchants did not compete with each other. Indonesia in those days supplied the European market with highly important products, such as spices and groceries. Particularly rich in these products were the province of Bantam (in the West of Java), Lampong (in the South of Sumatra) and the Molucca, archipelago (in eastern Indonesia between Celebes and New Guinea).

Backed by the force of arms, the „Ost India Company“ took full advantage of its monopoly in the Indonesian trade. Regardless of the high prices prevailing in Europe on spices and groceries, the Company compelled the Indonesian peasants to sell their products to it at ridiculously low prices.

Moreover, the Dutch merchants exploited the peasants also by other means, frequently with the aid of the native rulers, with whom they had concluded specific agreements. Batavia was at that time a slave market, and to it peasants were drafted from all Indonesia, — from Sumatra, Borneo, and particularly from Celebes and the Molucca archipelago, where they were sold into slavery. Thus, Batavia furnished the central market of cheap labour-power for the imperialists. Later on, fearing an insurrection of the slaves in Batavia, they transferred them to central Java, notably to Depok.

After a short period of British administration in Indonesia¹⁾ which lasted from 1813 until 1816, the „Ost India Company“ was dissolved, and possession of that country was taken by the Dutch government. Nevertheless the Dutch merchants continued to enjoy their monopoly rights of trading in the products of the Indonesian peasants. On the other hand, measures taken by the Dutch government, particularly the Land Rent and Compulsory Labor measures, further increased the impoverishment of the peasants.

The Land Rent consisted of a tax on income derived from the cultivation of the land. It had been introduced by the provisional British administration, and retained by the Dutch government. Later on the land allotments were classified into „fertile“, „more or less fertile“, and „unfertile“, but at that time there was no such division. Owing to the absence of data as to the number of population in the villages and the extent of the land under cultivation, a simplified system in the collection of land rents was employed, admitting the possibility of all manner of abuse. According to this system the peasants of a given village were obliged to pay through their elder a lump sum of 200 florins (and up to 400 florins for larger villages) per annum. The share in the tax of the individual peasants, of course, was allotted in quite an arbitrary manner. The village elders did everything in their power to extort the required amount, regardless of the dire poverty of their villagers. Thus this land rent tax resembled rather the payment of tribute by a vanquished people to its conqueror.

The Compulsory Labour („Heerendienst“) was a system of compulsory service imposed by the government upon the Indonesian peasants. The Dutch capitalists needed free labour power for road construction purposes in order to facilitate the penetration of capital into the heart of the country for the merciless exploitation of the population and natural resources.

This „Heerendienst“ constitutes even today one of the government measures mostly detested by the peasants, being responsible for numerous insurrections. Later on, however, the „Heerendienst“ was somewhat relaxed, and even partly abolished, inasmuch as the peasants were permitted to pay money in lieu of personal labour upon the roads.²⁾

The system of compulsory labour prevented the peasants from cultivating their fields during considerable parts of the year. In regions far removed from their villages the Indonesian peasants were compelled to build country-roads, and later on also railways. They received a miserable pittance for their labour, and since hardly anything could be purchased in those out-of-the-way regions, the peasants either had to supply themselves with provisions to last them for many weeks, or they starved. Tens of thousands of peasants

1) After the conquest of Holland by Napoleon, who had waged war against England, the British governor of Singapore, Raffles, occupied Java and ousted the Dutch governor, Jansen. Later on, after the Congress of Vienna, Indonesia was returned by the British to the Dutch.

2) Later on we shall deal with the redemption of „Heerendienst“ and its results (abuses).

perished from all kinds of diseases in the course of railway constructions in marshy districts. The „Heerendienst“ was indeed a terrible scourge for the Indonesian peasants.

Later on, owing to various causes — peasant uprisings, wars with native rulers etc., — the trade in spices and groceries ceased to yield the former huge profits to the Dutch capitalists. On the other hand, the Dutch government needed a lot of money to restore the country which fared badly as a result of the Napoleonic wars, the revolution, and the secession from Belgium (in 1830).

It was then that Dutch capitalists introduced in to the country a new system of exploitation, — the damnable system which cost the lives of several millions of Indonesian peasants. We refer to the so-called „Cultuurstelsel“ (system of agriculture) introduced in 1830 by the Dutch colonial minister Van den Bosch.

This „Cultuurstelsel“ system compelled the peasants to reserve two-fifths of their land allotments for the cultivation of such products which the European market stood in need in, such as coffee, tobacco and sugar, and which the peasants were obliged to sell to the government at very low fixed prices. Furthermore, the government had established large coffee plantations on which the peasants were compelled to work for very low pay. As a result of this policy, the Dutch bourgeoisie reaped million of florins profit from the realisation of the above mentioned products on the European market and it is no secret, for instance, that the largest railway in Holland was built on the profits derived from this source.

But to the Indonesian peasants this system of agriculture was a terrible scourge. According to regulation, they were compelled to devote two-fifths, and frequently as much as two-thirds of their land to the cultivation of these crops, and of the most fertile plots into the bargain. They were also obliged to cultivate this part of their land without obtaining remuneration. They also had no time for the cultivation of their remaining land, since they had also to do compulsory labour on the roads („Heerendienst“).

The very lowest fixed prices were put upon the peasants' products, while that on rice — their staple food — as a result of the „Cultuurstelsel“ system rose to a very high level. There was famine everywhere, and the least resistance on the part of the unorganised peasants was mercilessly punished, so that millions of peasants died either from famine or from brutal repressions. The Javanese peasants, however, were then unable to revolt on a large scale, since they had been utterly weakened by such cruel exploitation and repressions, particularly after the big revolt in 1825—1830 (that is, before the introduction of „Cultuurstelsel“), with which we shall deal further on.

The „Cultuurstelsel“ system died a natural death, so to speak. On the one hand it was hastened on by the resistance put up by the peasants in numerous districts of Indonesia, particularly in Bandjarmasin (Borneo), whilst it was also considerably due to the costly war against the King of Atjeh, already mentioned previously. Much was also due to the protest this government monopoly of trade in colonial

products called forth among some capitalist circles in Holland. At first the system of „Cultuurstelsel“ was abolished as far as sugar, tobacco and indigo was concerned, but at the end of the 19th century it affected that of coffee too.

Since that time private capital began to penetrate into Indonesia. New methods of exploitation of the natural resources were introduced, which will be dealt with in the next chapter.

This terrible exploitation of the Indonesian peasants was responded to at the time by insurrections, wars, and individual attacks upon the oppressors. Frequently the struggle of the Indonesian peasants assumed a religious, Islamic hue, since the majority of the population, after the Mohammedan victory at the close of the 14th century, were Mohammedans. Only in the northern portion of Celebes and in the province of Ambon (on the Molucca archipelago) there are now about one million Christians, some Buddhists on the island of Bali, while the central parts of Borneo, Celebes and New Caledonia are inhabited by savage tribes (pagans). Peasant wars and risings occurred in various parts of Indonesia every year until 1900; we shall note, however, only the more important events.

The peasant wars are depicted as wars between the Dutch and the native rulers. It is frequently impossible to detect the economic cause of these wars. Frequently this cause is overshadowed by other aspects. But in some cases it is possible to demonstrate that these wars were the wars of the oppressed peasants against the Western imperialists. This was the case both when the peasants gave their support to one or another of the native aristocratic rebels, as well as when the revolts were started by the peasants themselves and subsequently supported by the respective rulers.

A lucid example of this was furnished, among other things, in the wars of the Dutch against the rulers of the Molucca archipelago, Fernal and Fidor, in 1618—19, and in 1856—58. The peasants there had shown the Dutch exploiters partly armed and partly passive resistance, i. e. by refusing to produce spices and groceries, as the Dutch paid them too little for their products.¹⁾ This resistance of the peasants was supported by the Kings Fernal and Fidor. The Dutch then declared war on them and subjugated them, in order to compel the peasants to produce groceries and spices and sell them to the Dutch.

Particular cruelty was practised in the suppression of the peasants' resistance at Fomiri and Seram (on the Molucca archipelago). Thousands of peasants were shot by the Dutch army.

The revolt of the peasants in Muinhabana (western Sumatra), although religious in appearance, had in reality been caused by the impoverishment of the peasants. The revolt broke out at Baliĵ in 1822 and continued, with brief temporary respites, until 1841. This peasant movement was led by the „padri“, the priests of the Mohammedan sect who were very hostile to the Christians. The peasants complained chiefly about the „Heerendienst“, but they also felt the pressure of the

1) As we have already said, the Dutch enjoyed a monopoly of trade in these products.

„Land Rents“ which encouraged abuse on the part of the petty officials and village elders. Among the notable events of this revolt is the storming of the „Goegoer Malintang“ fortress in 1825, a Dutch bulwark on the Western shore of Sumatra. The peasants fought with great courage, although they had no fire-arms, and the revolt was eventually suppressed with great cruelty. Thousands of peasants, their wives and children had been sacrificed to the Dutch bourgeoisie.

Nearly at the same time a revolt broke out in 1825 at Djojaharta (in the central part of Java), headed by Diponegoro and Ali Basoh Provisa. This revolt was outwardly of a nationalist character, but it had been caused by the miserable peasant conditions. „Heerendienst“ and „Land Rents“ were the governmental measures particularly detested by the peasants. One of the immediate causes of the revolt was the construction of a large road across Java from the western to the eastern shore. It cost the lives of tens of thousands of peasants who were compelled to work in districts infected with malaria.

Soon the revolution had spread to localities adjacent to the province of Djojaharta, gradually involving all the provinces of Java. Hundreds of thousands of peasants joined the insurgents, and the Dutch army was nearly driven from the whole of the island. Only large towns like Batavia, Semarang, Surabaya and their environments, were held by the Dutch. Soon, however, the tables turned against the insurgents, as the Dutch had resorted to new tactics. The Dutch army began to burn occupied insurgent villages, and to kill and assault the remaining women and children. In this manner the insurgent villages were gradually subjugated to the Dutch authorities, because the peasants feared a similar fate might overtake also their villages and their wives and children. The peasants nevertheless put up a brave fight in the central part of Java. They carried on guerilla warfare against the Dutch, holding them off for a long time.

Finally, after five years of bitter fighting, this peasant revolt was crushed by the aid of base treachery. In 1832 the Dutch general De-Kock invited Diponegoro to Magelang (not far from Djojoharta) for peace negotiations. As the peasant leader arrived in good faith, he was arrested and banished to Mahasar (in Celebes), where he died in exile.

The peasant revolt at Bandjarmasin (on the southern shore of Borneo), which lasted from 1859 until 1871, was one of the greatest events in the peasant movement of Indonesia. Its immediate cause was the „Cultuurstelsel“. This brutal system of exploitation was so resolutely resisted by the independence-loving peasants of that district that during the course of twelve years the system could not be put in operation. Although the peasants fought very bravely and heroically, they were compelled to give up their guerilla warfare, unable to stand up against western technique. Their struggle had cost numerous sacrifices. The resistance was crushed, but suppressed discontent remained, and the struggle will no doubt flare up again with all force.

In 1888 (on the western shore of Java) a peasant revolt broke out at Tjilegon, led by Mohammedan priests; it consequently bore partly a religious appearance, whereas the real cause was peasant discontent. Tjilegon is less fertile than the rest of Java, and

the peasants are very poor. Their poverty was aggravated by „Cultuurstelsel“, accompanied by a decline in the trade in groceries and spices which represented the main source of income for the local peasants. Nothing was undertaken by the government to alleviate peasant conditions. No wonder, therefore, that the propaganda by the „orthodox“ Mohammedan priests of a holy war against the Christian government was fervidly received by the peasants. Without proper preparation for the revolt to ensure success, the peasants attacked the government officials and killed them. But the revolt was soon crushed. The Dutch soldiers arriving from Batavia resorted to methods of brutal terrorism. Forty of the peasant leaders were arrested and banished to Mahasar (in Celebes). The majority of them died, but some of them survived up to the present day, including the peasant leader Mohammed Arojad.

Finally, it should be mentioned that in the province of Atjeh (in the northern part of Sumatra), since its subjugation in 1874 to this day, there have been ceaseless revolts of the peasants. The most conspicuous were the revolts of 1893 and 1907 in which the insurgent peasants have been frequently victorious, and in which the most notable peasant leaders were Toehoe Oemar, Tjoet Ali, and Blang Pidi.

Having come down to our own period, we should note the little revolts which broke out on the western shore of Atjeh in 1924 (at Bahongan), and in the beginning of the current year at Troemon. The cause of these revolts was chiefly due to Heerendienst and the extortion of unbearable taxes, as the western shore of Atjeh is a poor country inhabited by poor peasants. The large revolts were led by Toehoe Moloed and Angasah. In these, as well as in many other revolts, the peasants fought not without success: scores of Dutch soldiers and officers were killed, and scores of rifles were seized by the insurgents, but eventually a strong Dutch army crushed the revolt. In the next chapter we shall deal with the manner in which the „redemption“ of the „Heerendienst“ was carried out in practice, which served as one of the causes of the latest revolts in the province of Atjeh.

Approximately in 1900 the imperialist Dutch bourgeoisie reached the height of its authority over all parts of Indonesia. About the same time there appeared room for large investments of foreign capital. Soon there emerged a new national and a proletarian movement, and the struggle of the Indonesian peasant masses assumed a new character. This will form the subject of one of our next chapters.

CHAPTER TWO.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE PEASANTRY.

Indonesia is a country of poor peasants; the majority of the population, as we have already seen, consists of peasants possessing on an average not more than one bahu¹⁾ of land.

1) 1 Bahu equals 1.75 acres, or 0.71 hectare.

According to official statistics published by the Dutch Government in 1925,¹⁾ referring to a survey of land holdings in the district of Tumpanu (part of the province of Pasuruan), we find the allotments of land among the peasants stated in the following table:

Size of Land Holdings	Per 1,000 Peasants	
	In 1914	In 1924
Less than 1 Bahu:		
Up to 0.125 Bahu.	239	246
From 0.125 " 0.25 "	100	104
" 0.25 " 0.75 "	84	87
" 0.75 " 1.00 "	88	93
Total	511	530
More than 1 Bahu:		
From 1 Bahu to 2 Bahu	260	256
" 2 " 4 "	167	157
" 4 " 6 "	39	37
" 6 " 9 "	3	3
" 9 " 12 "	3	3
" 12 " 15 "	2	2
Over 15 "	1	1

Thus we find that in this district over one half of the land-holding peasants have not more than 1 bahu of land, and slightly over one fourth of them have from 1 to 2 bahu. We also see that some changes took place in the course of 10 years. Conditions grew worse and the number of middle peasants, i. e. those holding from 2 to 6 bahu of land decreased.

As to other provinces, there are no precise data available, but it seems pretty certain that the majority of the peasants are holding very small allotments, and that the holdings of the wealthy and middle peasants in Indonesia are relatively smaller than similar peasant holdings in Western Europe.

There are few large landowners, whose ownership of their estates is usually associated with the exercise of certain sovereign rights. In Indonesia, where the effect of imperialism upon feudal society has not been uniform, there is great variety in the forms of land-tenure, and the burdens upon the peasantry differ in accordance with the conditions obtaining in different provinces.

For purposes of convenience, we shall divide the characterisation of the forms of land-tenure in Indonesia into four parts:

1) "Mededeelingen der Regeering omtrent enkele onderwerpen van algemeen belang." "This survey was undertaken", so we are told, "in order to establish the extent of prosperity among the population . . ."

Firstly, there are districts where the peasants are private land proprietors. These comprise chiefly the western and eastern portions of Java, a considerable portion of Sumatra, and some portions of the other islands of Indonesia.

Secondly, there are districts where the peasants are communal landholders, which is the case chiefly in the central portions of Java. The land under cultivation constitutes the property of the village community, i. e. the communal property of the peasants who live in that village.

Such „communal property“ exists under different forms. According to statistical data for 1922 there were:

2,718 villages where the redistribution of land among the peasants takes place annually;

1,857 villages where the redistribution of land takes place once in two years or more;

7,890 villages where the peasants have „permanent holdings“ of communal land, i. e. the peasants enjoy the hereditary right of cultivating their allotments, without having the right of selling them;

finally, there are 933 villages where various forms of communal property exist.

The system of communal ownership by the peasants, with periodical redistribution of the land (once annually or less often), exists only in the following provinces:

Provinces.	Size of Individual Peasant Allotments.
Pekalongan	0.43 Hectare
Semarang	0.40 „
Rembang	0.27 „
Banumas	0.55 „
Madiun	0.76 „
Surabaya	0.71 „
Kediri	0.60 „
Pasuruan	0.71 „

Thus we see that in the majority of these provinces the peasants are holding less than 1 bahu of land.

Although the peasants holding communal land have no right to sell it, they nevertheless may sell their right to cultivate it.

The redistribution of land is carried out at village meetings of peasants, but is effected in reality by the village elder. The village elders are the virtual rulers in their villages, and at redistribution time many dirty deeds are done, the elders looking after the interests of their relatives, and so on.

The principle of „communal land-ownership“, existing since the early stages in the development of human society, cannot survive during the period of imperialist capitalism accompanied as it is by base trickery of government officials. Moreover, the Javanese villages, particularly in central Java, are over-populated (the density of the population in the less industrialised provinces of Pekalongan, Kedu and Jogjakarta being respectively 402, 443 and 404 to the square kilometre).

The government encourages the passing of common land under private ownership, in order to sever the ties uniting the peasants in the village commune, and to facilitate the penetration of capital into the village for the merciless exploitation of the peasants. Thus we see a steady decrease in the number of villages under communal land-ownership. On the island of Java such villages numbered:

In 1882	23,627
„ 1902	20,280
„ 1912	17,358
„ 1922	13,400

Furthermore, on the islands of Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes and New Guinea, there are districts where the land is the communal property of the tribe or of the clan, and the customs of the tribe, or clan, determine the manner of distribution, exploitation and destiny of the land.

Thirdly, there are districts that are still ruled by the native princes (petty kings) who are tied by „political treaties“ with the Indonesian government. In these districts the prince is the owner of the land, while the peasants enjoy only the „right of working it“. Not only must they pay taxes, but they also have to give part of their harvest to, and perform numerous services for the princes (compulsory labour). Everywhere these peasants are to be found in a state of abject slavery. Such are the conditions in the Javanese provinces of Jokjakarta and Surakarta, as well as in Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, Timor, and so on.

Fourthly, there are the so-called „private lands“ in Java. These were sold, some time at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to British, Dutch, Chinese and Arabian capitalists by the Dutch government, who was at that time in great financial straits.

The large landowners enjoy not only the possession of the land, but also certain treaty rights in these districts. They have the authority not only to impose taxes, but also to inflict penalties, within certain limits (to imprison peasants and to fine them). The peasants of these districts are among the poorest peasants in Indonesia. It is in these districts that peasant revolts and strikes chiefly take place. Government efforts in recent years to buy out these „private lands“ were unsuccessful, as the landowners demanded exorbitant prices.

The main burden upon the peasantry, as we have already said, is the system of land rent, or land income tax. This tax is 10—20 florins per 1 bahu (0.71 hectare) according to the land's fertility and location. There were different rates for districts directly subject to the government, those ruled by the native princes, or finally, the so-called „private lands“. As a matter of fact, the tax imposed is everywhere considerably in excess of the established rates, owing to the selfish interests of the village elders, who get 8% of the tax collections in their respective villages.

There exists at the present time a possibility of ransoming oneself from „Heerendienst“ (compulsory labour on road-building, or „Rodi“, in the Malay vernacular) in the greater part of Indonesia. At first this system of exemption was introduced in Java, where labourers can easily

be hired, and later on it was extended to many other parts of Indonesia. In some districts, e. g. on the Timor Island and in some parts of Borneo and Celebes, to ransom oneself from „Heerendienst“ is still inadmissible.

In some districts where it is permitted, the government officials nevertheless compel the peasants to perform such labour, even if they have already paid for exemption. Such cases, for instance, have occurred in the western part of the province of Atjeh (North Sumatra), which have served as one of the causes of peasant riots in recent months („Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant“ April 26th, 1926).

The sum payable for exemption from „Heerendienst“ (known in Java under the name of „padjeng kepala“) is not a uniform one. Peasants living on „private lands“, and in districts dominated by the local princes, have to pay a higher price than the peasants of other districts. While the peasants in the province of Surabaia (Java) have to pay an exemption tax of 3 florins per annum, those of Makasara district (Celebes) must pay 5 florins, and those of the petty kingdoms of Goa and Boni (Celebes) have to pay as much as 10 florins.¹⁾ The duration of the „Heerendienst“ (if not exempted, or if exemption is not permitted) also varies according to district. In the province of East Sumatra, for instance, it lasts 40 days, in the province of Menado (Celebes) 32 days, and on the Timor isle 36 days, in the year.²⁾ In reality, however, the road-service lasts even longer as a rule, which is due, in the first place, to arbitrary rule by the government officials, and secondly, to the fact that it frequently takes the peasant 3 or 4 days to reach the place of work (laying roads over the mountains, etc.).

Other burdens imposed upon the peasantry consist of fishing, rural, cattle, street lighting, village school taxes, etc., besides compulsory services in the village, such as constabulary work, cleaning the yards of the village elder, and so on. The last-named duties may also be exempted from by monetary payment. Furthermore, the peasants living on „private lands“ and in the „small native kingdoms“ have to perform a whole variety of additional petty services which, put together, constitute a tremendous burden upon the peasantry. For instance, they must do compulsory work for the „Adalgemenstap“ (the administration of a native district in which the same customs and laws prevail), or pay an annual exemption tax of 2—½ florins. Naturally, the extra duties and services of the peasants vary in the different „native kingdoms“ depending upon the laws and regulations established by the native princes under the control of the Indonesian government.

We have already said in the beginning of this chapter that the overwhelming majority of Indonesian peasants possess 1 bahu of land. Nevertheless there are hundreds of thousands of peasants possessing less than 1 bahu.

However, for the purpose of examining the peasant's budget of income and expenditure, let us take a fairly favourable case: that of a

1) „Niala“ (The Spark), communist newspaper in Indonesia, October 30, 1925.

2) „Statistical Abstract for the Netherlands East-Indies“ 1922-1923.

peasant possessing 1 bahu of irrigated, fertile land, which yields an income of about 200 florins annually.¹⁾ In addition, the peasant may earn not more than 60 florins annually, as an agricultural labourer (for 10 months in the year he is engaged on his own field, having only 2 months to spare) for some wealthy peasant, or upon the sugar plantations, as well as by the labour of his wife and children (factory work, selling of eggs, etc.). Thus the annual income of a peasant family, averaging 5 members, amounts altogether to 260 florins. The peasant has to spend not less than 60 florins annually on the purchase of new agricultural implements (about 20 florins) and clothing (say, 8 florins annually for each member of the family), so that he has only 200 florins left for the sustenance of his family and for the payment of taxes.

The peasants living upon the so-called „private lands“, which we have already referred to above, must pay the large land-owners not less than 20% of the income derived from their allotments (the so-called „tzukei“ etc.). For „Heerendienst“ and other duties (compulsory labour for the village and for the large land-owners) the peasant has to sacrifice about 50 or even 70 working days in the year, or if he purchases his exemption, he has to pay about 20% of the income from his allotments. Finally, he has to pay about 10% of his income to the government (land rent, fishery tax, market polls, etc.). Thus the peasant is left only with a balance of about 50% of his income for the maintenance of his family.²⁾

At the same time the majority of the peasants in such districts possess considerably less than 1 bahu of land. In fact, according to data given by Dr. W. Huender,³⁾ there were in those districts in 1920 about 2 million peasants cultivating altogether about 1,200,00 bahu of land, making an average of 0.6 bahu, or about 0.42 hectare.

The peasants living in the „petty native kingdoms“ are made to bear equally heavy burdens with those living on the „private lands“. This is what Dr. Huender has to say (in his above-mentioned book) about the peasants living in the „native kingdoms“ of Surakata and Jokjakarta:

„The population of the ‚kingdoms‘ of these princes—occupying altogether about 990,000 hectares, or 1,400,000 bahu—comprises about 3,430,000 people, of whom 3,400,000 are natives. As a result of the new administrative measures their economic position has become considerably worse than that of the population of the other districts of Java and Madoera, and the whole of their rural organisation has been upset. The right of the peasants to the land is very unstable, since they depend on the whims of the princes: they have only the right to cultivate the land; their taxes have been increased to 50 % of the income from their allotments . . .“

The peasants upon the allotments of communal land are, on the whole, poorer than the peasants of the other districts. According to

1) That is if the peasant cultivates rice (which takes about 6 months to ripen), varying it by the cultivation of tapioca, a floury substance used in food. If 2 crops of rice are raised in 1 year, it leads to the draining of the soil.

2) Wonso, „Kitab Tani“, pamphlet for peasants, in the Malay language.

3) Dr. W. Huender, „Economische toestand van de bevolking von Java en Madoera“; („Economic condition of the population of Java and Madura“).

Wonso's brochure „Kitab Tani“, there are in these districts more than a million families possessing only 0.5 bahu. While the villages in these districts, as we have already said, are greatly overpopulated, the large enterprises in export products, particularly the sugar plantations, take away a good deal of land from the peasants. This has resulted in further impoverishment of the peasantry.

Somewhat better is the position of the peasants in those districts where they hold land on the principles of private ownership. It is in these districts that wealthy peasants are to be met with. Here we find favourable conditions prevailing for the development of petty land-holdings into large properties; here, indeed, the wealthy peasants may buy up the land from the other peasants, which is not permitted in the other districts. Here the peasants do not have to bear the double yoke of exploitation to which the peasants on the „private lands“ and in the „petty native kingdoms“ have to submit. Here there is no such variety of taxes as in the above-described districts, but the poor peasants are nevertheless far more exploited by the wealthy peasants. The different forms of exploitation will be described later on.

Finally, in many districts in Sumatra, Borneo and Celebes the peasants usually possess more than 1 or 2 bahu of land, but their economic position, as a rule, is not much better than that of the peasants in other districts: frequently they possess no cattle, so that the output of their allotments is insignificant. Only during the last five years — after the introduction of rubber cultivation by the peasants in some of the districts of Sumatra and Borneo, and in connection with the sudden rise in rubber prices — in these districts a good many wealthy peasants can now be met with. On the other hand, „Heerendienst“ (road service) is more severe and is accompanied by heavy taxation imposed by the government upon the peasants engaged in the cultivation of rubber.

Thus, notwithstanding the diverse conditions obtaining in the different parts of Indonesia, there are many common features characterising the peasants' economic position.

To sum up, the peasant cultivating 1 bahu of land must pay approximately from 30 to 50% of his income in various taxes and for exemption from compulsory services. From 30 to 50% annually, out of an income of 200 florins, are appropriated by the government, by the large land-owners and by the native princes, so that the peasant is left only with from 100 to 140 florins for the upkeep of his family, or an average of about 10 florins per month for 5 people, or about 7 Dutch cents per diem per soul. This, of course, is far from enough, for even during harvesting time, when rice — the staple food of the population — is cheap, it requires not less than 10 cents per diem for 1 person. Thus, for the sustenance of an average family of 5 people, the minimum is 15 florins per month. Consequently, the peasants are underfed, and in the event of a bad harvest, thousands of peasants perish by famine.

Even in highly fertile Java there are districts (e. g. Trengalek in the province of Kediri, the province of Madoera, etc.) where now and again thousands of peasants perish from famine.

In the beginning of March, 1926, a report was published by the governmental commission which investigated the burden of taxation upon the people of Indonesia. The report was compiled by Meyer Ranneft Huender. After an examination of the report, the governmental commission which was to have made proposals re reorganisation of the taxation system, among other things, made the following observation:

„A mere superficial examination of the data collected in Meyer Ranneft Huender's report exposes extreme inequality in the distribution of the burden of taxation. This indicates a tremendous error in the tax regulations. The more you study the facts of the report the more you become confirmed in this conviction. For this reason the Commission wishes to draw particular attention to the fact that land properties are much overtaxed as compared with other sources of income,¹⁾ and also to the fact that the burden of taxation has not been equitably distributed.“

On the question of taxation, the following recommendations were made by the Commission:

1) Abolition of „padjeg kepal“ (exemption tax on the „Heeren-diest“, or road service) in Java and Madoera.

2) A rebate of taxes for 10 pikolei (1 pikolei equals about 120 lbs) of rice from each bahu, and on allotments which produce less than 20 pikolei per bahu, providing, however, that the minimum tax shall be put at 2 pikolei per bahu. (The Commission found it necessary to make this recommendation in view of the fact that hitherto, in the calculation of taxes on agricultural incomes, it was not taken into consideration that part of the crop goes to personal consumption and for seeds for further cultivation.)

3) Tax exemption for peasants cultivating land belonging to other peasants on a sharing basis (e. g. metayers, etc.).

4) Abolition of the maximum tax (20 florins per bahu) on non-irrigated land.

5) The establishment of fixed prices on rice (to combat speculation).

The question of duties established by the village, shall be subject to special investigation.

Thus, having convinced themselves of the fact that the peasants are overtaxed, they now wish — fearing a revolutionary movement among the peasants — to relieve the burden on the peasantry (nevertheless the recommendation made in Point 4 will result in increasing the burden for some groups of the peasants, particularly for the most backward inhabitants of the mountains).

The reforms recommended by the Commission, however, are only calculated to deceive the peasants. In reality, while reducing the direct taxes, they want to increase the indirect taxes which are not immediately noticed by the peasants. It was these indirect taxes that the Commission recommended to increase.

1) It was calculated by the Commission that the direct taxes upon the poor peasants earning 225 florins annually (apart from compulsory labour etc.) were relatively higher than those imposed upon European and Oriental foreigners (Chinese, Arabs etc. earning from 8,000 to 9,000 florins annually).

The misery of the peasants is further aggravated by the monstrous activity of the numerous usurers. These usually consist of Chinese merchants and native „hadji“ (i. e. Mohammedans who have performed a pilgrimage, or „hadji“, to Mecca; the „hadji“, as a rule, are wealthy peasants). These usurers exploit the poor peasants in a great variety of ways. Most frequent are the following methods of exploitation:

1) The Chinese usurer buys an option on the harvest (rice,¹⁾ maize, tapioca, etc.),²⁾ usually paying an advance price of about 70 florins for 1 bahu of rice. Out of this amount he advances, say, 10 or 15 florins, as the peasant usually needs money after the sowing season. In the agreement it is stipulated that in the event of a good harvest the peasant is to get the remainder of the purchase price, and the Chinese usurer — the entire crop. But if the harvest should turn out medium or bad, the peasant is to get no more money, or only an insignificant portion of the sale price. Whereas, in the event of a good harvest, 1 bahu of rice yields an income of about 140 florins, the peasant gets only 70 florins. Thus, the Chinese usurer in a period of six months (the time required for 1 harvest of rice) draws an interest of 100% on his capital, or 200% per annum.

2) The Chinese usurer goes to the market and advances a loan to a peasant woman selling her own products (eggs, fruit, etc.), say, to the amount of 10 florins (needed by her for the purchase of clothing and the like), for which she is to pay an interest of 2 florins for two months. This compound sum of 12 florins she has to repay to the usurer by instalments of 20 cents daily. Thus the usurer earns 20% on his money in 2 months, and since the principal gets reduced day by day, it means that he earns more than 120% per annum on his capital. In this manner, handling only a few scores of florins, he can exploit a large number of peasants or peasant women, because the money daily collected by him he can immediately loan to others. One cannot help wondering at the persistence with which the usurer carries on his monstrous work: now and then one may see one of these usurers severely beaten up by a crowd of his victims.

3) One of the favourite methods of the Chinese usurer for the exploitation of the peasants is cheating in weight by means of sleight-of-hand tricks with the „dazin“.³⁾ One of the methods of deception here consists in the following: a fairly prosperous peasant wants to engage in business, selling to the peasants such commodities as implements, salt, lamp oil etc. He concludes an agreement with a Chinese merchant in the city, usually for a period of 3 years, during which time he undertakes to sell to this Chinaman 500 pikolei⁴⁾ of rice every six months at the fixed price of 8 florins for 1 pikolei. In his turn, the Chinese usurer undertakes to supply him with goods to an amount equal to the value of the rice.

It is when he peasant delivers the rice that the whole bag of tricks flies open. The peasant thinks that he has delivered 500 pikolei of rice,

1) In the husk.

2) Foreigners may not buy or hire land unless by special permit from the government.

3) „Dazin“, an appliance for weighing, much in vogue in the petty market trade in Indonesia.

4) 1 pikolei equals about 150 lbs. or 61.76 kg.

but after being weighed by the Chinaman on his „dazin“ in the very presence of the peasant, it turns out to be only 400 pikolei. By means of such „trade secrets“ the Chinaman may cheat the peasant out of 20 pikolei on a hundred.

Although the price of rice may go up (and the Chinese merchant, keeping in contact with China, Saigon, etc., gets such information before the peasant), the Chinaman will always claim that the price was low, and invariably value the rice at the fixed price of 8 florins per pikolei. If the peasant demurs, insisting that rice was being sold at 10 florins per pikolei, and threatens to refuse to renew the agreement upon its expiration, the Chinese merchant then, regardless of the agreement, consents to pay the peasant 10 florins per pikolei. Of course, he will manage to cheat the peasant in some other way, after binding him by a new agreement. The Chinese usurer does not pay the peasant in cash, but in goods from his store at prices usually from 25 to 50% above the ordinary. Furthermore, he will cheat the peasant also on the quantity of goods, for instance, by weighing the salt or the sugar sold to the peasant by his own false „dazin“.

Thus, the peasant is bound hand and foot to the Chinese usurer for a period of no less than three years, during which he is exploited in scores of ways.

The Chinese usurer feels at liberty to resort to all manner of arrogant deceit in his dealings with the peasants by corrupting and deceiving the government officials.

4) The Hadji usurer, as a rule, resorts to different methods of exploitation. He buys the land from the poor peasants, or hires it, on condition that the peasant will cultivate the land on his own account while surrendering to the Hadji usurer one half or one third of the harvest. In this manner the lion's share of the peasant's harvest is appropriated by the Hadje usurer, who draws a profit of about 150 % on his capital.

5) As a moneylender, the Hadji usurer acts usually in the following manner: he advances the poor peasant, for instance, 10 florins to be repayed after the harvest by five or six pikolei of rice. The latter, of course, is valued at the very lowest price, i. e. that prevailing during under a fair general harvest season ($1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 florins per pikolei). Thus, the Hadji usurer may even claim that he charges no interest on his money. Nevertheless, by the aid of this system, he manages, as a rule, to grab the whole harvest of the poor peasant. The Hadji usurer will hoard the rice until the price will go up, and then he will sell it either to the rice-cleaning factories or to the very same peasant from whom he bought it, at prices ranging from 4 to 5 florins per pikolei. In this manner the usurer realises not less than 150 % annual interest on his capital.

There were attempts, so to speak, on the part of the government, to help the peasant out of the clutches of the usurers. For this purpose it founded the so-called „rural rice banks“ („Desalumbungi“, in Malayian), in order to „assist“ the peasants in need of either rice or money. The capital of these banks was formed at the outset by investments from the peasants themselves, who contributed their shares in the shape of

rice after the harvest. At the „Desalumbungi“ the peasants may obtain loans either in rice or in money (usually in rice), repaying after the harvest at the rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ pikolei for each pikolei advanced. Thus, the government too extorts usurer's rates of interest, the „Desalumbungi“ earning an interest of 50% in six months, or 100% per annum. This has been the main reason for the absolute failure of the rice banks to fulfil their avowed purpose. Moreover, the managing expenses¹⁾ of the banks are very high (salary item, and bribes). Matters were brought to a head when the government refused to refund to the peasants the capital (rice) invested by them towards the capital stock of the banks. Finally, the peasants began to withdraw their investments by taking loans in rice and withholding payment. In this manner many of the „Desalumbungi“ were put out of business, their number decreasing regularly year by year. Thus in Java there were:

in 1917	10,850	Desalumbungi.
„ 1918	10,385	„
„ 1919	9,974	„
„ 1920	9,500	„
„ 1921	9,033	„
„ 1922	8,210	„

In the course of five years more than 2,500 Desalumbungi were wound up. Finally, it was realised by the government that there was no way of „saving“ these rice banks, and in 1923 it liquidated the surviving ones. Instead of returning to the peasants the investments from the liquidated banks, it reinvested them in the „people's banks“ (government banks existing in every town and village, where money loans are obtainable at 20% interest).

Another attempt of the government to „assist“ the peasants was by founding in large villages the so-called „rural banks“ to encourage thrift among the peasants. The capital of these banks was formed from funds advanced by the „people's banks“ and from cash deposits by the peasants. Loans are advanced to the peasants by these banks approximately at 25%, which is nearly equal to the terms of the above-described Chinese usurer. Thus, if a peasant gets a loan, say, of 10 florins, he has to repay 12 florins in the course of a year at the rate of 1 florin per month. While the banks are charging an interest of 25%, the peasant depositors getting only 5% on their savings. Apparently, this attempt of the government to „assist“ the peasants and to encourage thrift has also fizzled out. Indeed, the data of the Central Statistical Department concerning these banks are rather discouraging, showing a steady decrease in the number of saving banks and in the total amounts of deposits year by year:

Years	Number of rural banks	Total amount of deposits (in florins)
1917	2,819	1,113,743
1918	2,814	826,943
1919	2,567	664,372
1920	2,487	574,506
1921	2,741	622,786
1922	3,084	561,006

1) The management expenses in 1922 amounted to about 10% of the net capital

In 1921 and 1922 there was an increase in the number of these banks for the reason that 503 banks were founded by the government in Sumatra, Celebes and Bali. Nevertheless the sum-total of the deposits in 1922 was already less than in 1921. The fact of the decrease in the peasants' deposits indicates the growing impoverishment of the peasants.

An important factor contributing to this „decreased prosperity“ of the peasants consisted in the position assumed by the large producers of export crops in regard to the native agriculturists. While the Indonesian peasants are suffering from a shortage of land, the large agricultural enterprises, particularly the sugar plantations, are trying to take away the land from the peasants. Although the government ostensibly defends the right of the natives to the land, nevertheless it easily grants concessions to foreign capitalists in the shape of long leases on large estates, and so on. Furthermore, there are numerous restrictions in the cultivation of virgin soil, permitting of extensive abuse on the part of government officials.

A particularly glaring example of the manner in which the land is taken away from the Indonesian peasants by the large agricultural enterprises engaged in the production of export crops is furnished by the sugar plantations, as the sugar canes are planted upon the rice fields. For the cultivation of sugar the government issues permits to the large plantations to hire land from the peasants (e. g. 1,000 bahu of land for a given sugar enterprise), but not more than one third of the irrigated land of the peasants in each village. The village elders exert every effort (frequently compelling the peasants) to induce the peasants to lease their land allotments to the capitalist sugar-manufacturers, since these elders get a bonus from the sugar-manufacturers in the shape of from 2½ to 5 florins (depending on the fertility of the land) for each bahu of land leased by the peasants of their villages to these capitalists.

The agreement is usually made for three years, when it has to be renewed. For ten months the leased land is used for the cultivation of sugar cane, then it is used by the peasants for 18 month in the cultivation of rice, then it goes again under sugar cane, and so on. During the second period the capitalists hire another third of the irrigated land.

Furthermore, sugar cane is cultivated on land rented from the native princes, on the so-called „private lands“, and on land leased by the government on long term concessions. In the first case the native princes compel the peasants, who have previously cultivated this land, to work now on the sugar plantations. Thus, the peasants in these districts are hired out along with the land, like so many heads of cattle.

In 1923 the area of sugar plantations in Java occupied:

On land leased from the native princes,
on the so-called „private lands“, and

on land leased by the government on long term concessions	47,866 bahu (33,985 hectares)
On land leased from the peasants ¹⁾ . . .	175,859 bahu (124,860 hectares)
Total	<u>223,725 bahu (158,845 hectares)</u>

Thus, 223,725 bahu of land are taken away annually from the peasants by the large sugar producers alone.

The average annual rent for 1 bahu of land in 1922 amounted to 50 florins. Consequently, if a peasant possessing 1 bahu of land has leased his allotment to the sugar manufacturer, working at the same time on the sugar plantation as a labourer and earning about 90 florins per annum, he realises altogether during that year 140 florins (50 + 90). We have already pointed out that 1 bahu of land yields an income of about 200 florins per annum; consequently, by leasing his land he loses 60 florins per annum. Moreover, in the course of this year he is exploited also as a labourer upon the sugar plantation.

These peasants, leasing their land, are not the only victims of the large sugar producers. The water needed for the irrigation of the peasants' rice fields is diverted in the daytime by the government irrigation employees to the sugar plantations, so that the peasants can obtain the necessary water for the irrigation of their rice fields only at night time. This evil is so flagrant that it has served as a perpetual cause of discontent among the peasants in the sugar producing districts.

In spite of their being harassed by the large producers of export crops during so many decades, the small peasant farms, nevertheless, are still of great importance, particularly in feeding the native population. In 1922 the aggregate value of the agricultural produce of the Indonesian peasants amounted to 1½ billion florins, while the agricultural output of the large foreign plantations amounted only to 600 million florins. The Indonesian peasants' share in the country's total exports of agricultural produce in 1922 was 24%. The peasants produce chiefly rubber for export. We have already pointed out the exceptional importance of the cultivation of rubber to the Indonesian peasants. The centres of rubber cultivation are: Djambi, Palembang, Tapanuli (on the isle of Sumatra), Pontianak, and Bandjarmasin (in Borneo).

The great increase in the price of rubber,) — yielding substantial earnings to the peasants engaged in its cultivation, — did not prevent the fairly prosperous and wealthy peasants from being oppressed. Under the pretext of encouraging the proper cultivation of rubber, the government levied an extra tax upon the export rubber of these peasants. Only those who cultivate rubber in the manner adopted upon the plantations owned by the foreign capitalists³⁾ are exempt from this extraordinary tax. In this manner the government pretends to encourage

1) Many of the peasants are themselves cultivating sugar cane which they sell to the manufacturers, who refine it at their works,

2) In recent months there was a slight drop in its price.

3) Consisting in taking proper care of the rubber plants, in planting according to a certain system, putting the plants at a certain distance from each other, and so on.

the production of rubber by the native peasants, and thus increase their income. In reality, this measure is merely one of the methods of protecting the rubber production of foreign capitalists, for the native peasants engaged in its cultivation are considered as the latter's competitors. Naturally, the native peasants are highly discontented with this measure which handicaps them very much since they have not the means to cultivate rubber in the manner adopted upon the large plantations.

Moreover, the Indonesian peasants, whether engaged in the cultivation of rubber or of sugar cane, having no capital for the establishment of manufacturing plants for these products,¹⁾ have become the victims of the big capitalists. We have already described the manner in which the fairly prosperous and wealthy peasants engaged in the cultivation of rice have become the victims of the Chinese merchants.

Since the beginning of last year, when the price of rubber went up, there was a tremendous rise in the cost of living in the rubber districts, owing to speculation in essential commodities. Prices on foodstuffs (rice, meat, fish, etc.), cloth, tobacco, etc., rose to such an extent — (from 5 to 20 times dearer than anywhere else in the country) that the peasants engaged in rubber cultivation are not much better off than the middle class and wealthy peasants in the other districts of Indonesia. The high cost of living in these districts has been particularly disappointing to the labourers on the agricultural plantations, who arrived here mostly from Java, where they were told that wages from 2 to 4 florins per day could be earned on the rubber plantations²⁾ (e. g. in the district of Djambi on the isle of Sumatra). The majority of them are now returning home, sick and poorer than before.

Finally, in 1923 the government introduced a new tax, the so-called „Verpondindsbelasting“, which has caused great discontent among the fairly prosperous and wealthy peasants. Indeed, this tax upon house properties in towns and villages, owing to the new system of valuation, is from 50 to 100 times higher than before, since there was a tremendous increase in such values in recent years.

The intellectual level of the Indonesian peasants is very low indeed. 90% of the native population are illiterate³⁾, and at least 95% of the rural population can neither read nor write.

Schools for peasant children (village schools) have only been 15 years in existence. In 1923, there were only 8,975 village schools, attended by 705,785 children. There are village schools only in the large villages (generally at the rate of 1 school for 5 villages), and the peasants themselves must contribute towards their maintenance.

1) The co-operative movement among them is still in the stage of inception.

2) In other districts in Indonesia the agricultural labourer gets a daily wage of 30—60 cents on the large sugar, tobacco and rubber plantations. Frequently the Indonesian peasants cultivate rubber on „co-operative principles“: the peasant proprietor does not raise a finger, while the coolie works himself to death, getting one half of the income (Indische Mercuur“).

3) That is, they cannot read or write either in the Latin, Arabic or Javanese script.

Moreover, the peasants of those villages where there is communal ownership must furnish a land allotment to the teacher, who receives only 15 florins per month from the government. Finally, the peasants have to pay a tuition fee (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ florins per month) if their children attend school. Thus, the Indonesian peasants have to bear some expense in order to provide their children with education. The village school has two classes where the children are taught reading, writing and arithmetic. Many peasants keep their children out of school because they don't get much benefit from them, while the children are needed for field work, particularly during the harvest season. There are other state schools which are more useful to the peasants where they may learn how to cultivate the land more rationally, in order to increase its productivity. But as to the number of such elementary agricultural schools, — the least said the better! For the whole of Indonesia, with a peasant population of 35 million people, there were in 1922 only . . . 13 schools of this kind, attended by 219 pupils. And in 1923 the government closed 2 of these schools . . .

The Indonesian peasant has almost no political rights. The Indonesian peasants are unrepresented, and their voice is not heard in the so-called „representative councils“ (peoples councils, town councils, village councils, district councils, etc.). These councils are so constituted that 75% of their members are government officials, and the remainder is made up of big capitalists and their hirelings. Neither do the peasant masses vote for the members of these bodies. Even the ancient democratic right of the peasants, which was their long before the advent of the western bourgeoisie, has been stolen by the capitalist government, and turned into a parody. We refer to the right of the peasants to elect their village elders („Lurach“, in Malayian). At the present time, all the peasants who are landholders, men or women, can theoretically elect their village elder at a public meeting; but the government (represented by the governor of the province) reserves the right of „veto“, i. e. if he does not approve of the peasants' choice he declares them void, and can order new elections. After such an „election“, the elected „Lurach“ approved by the governor, is appointed by the latter for life. He may be dismissed only by the governor of the province, while the peasants may not take any steps against their elder. Thus, the village elders do not represent the peasants, but are government officials.

There are other cases when meetings of landholders are called. — for instance, when a capitalist sugar manufacturer wants to lease land in a given village, or when there is a redistribution of land (in the above-described villages where the system of common ownership of land exists), and so on. Such meetings may adopt resolutions, but the final dispensation is made by the village elder, a puppet of the government, who wields absolute authority in the village.

Thus we find that the Indonesian peasants, poor and prosperous alike, are subjected to great exploitation and oppression. The development of a native bourgeoisie (composed of prosperous and wealthy peasants) clashes with the almost autocratic power of the foreign capitalists.

CHAPTER THREE.

THE PAST AND PRESENT OF THE PEASANT MOVEMENT.

1) Some General Observations.

The twentieth century heralded a new epoch in the peasant movement of Indonesia. At the close of the nineteenth century extensive investments of Dutch capital, and since 1905, also of capital from other imperialist countries, were made in Indonesia, effecting a radical change in the economic situation of the country.

The violent stage of the conquest of the Indonesian people had come to an end. Henceforth began the period of peaceful penetration of capital. Feudal conditions were gradually stamped out, in order to allow free play to foreign capital. The industrialisation of the country began, and a new class came into being the proletariat. At the same time the native bourgeoisie was striving to regain its former positions.

But the number of small producers and poor peasants did not decrease, notwithstanding the fact that many of them became proletarianised and flocked to the towns. Even today they constitute the fundamental class in Indonesia, because, regardless of the rapid industrialisation of the country, feudal relations are still predominant. A tremendous change however took place in capitalist relations, in the position occupied by capital.

The Indonesian peasantry is very closely linked up with the young and growing proletariat. Hundreds of thousands of poor peasants are at the same time working as seasonal labourers upon the large plantations or in the sugar factories, etc., or several years at a stretch upon their fields, and the rest of the time earning their livelihood as hired workers. On the other hand, many of the wealthy and fairly prosperous peasants are at the same time petty tradesmen whose interest clash with those of the big foreign capitalists. Moreover, there is yet another important factor which has always played a tremendous part in the movement of the Indonesian peasants, a factor that cannot be ignored without detriment to the revolutionary peasant movement. It is the Mohammedan religion which is opposed to the Christian religion of those who rule over the Indonesian people, but which, like any other religion, can be interpreted in the interests of the international bourgeoisie and serve it faithfully.

The capitalists, as well as the reformers, as we shall presently see, fully appreciate the importance of this factor. Consequently, this ought to be thoroughly studied in order to gain a proper understanding of the present position of the peasant movement in Indonesia, and of its future prospects.

At the present time the peasant movement is strongly influenced by national, proletarian, and religious movements. Only in 1925 was there a purely peasant organisation founded; it was at a time when there was a spell of the cleverly organised white terror, when the capitalist government was making a fresh bid for support among the peasants. In general the peasants belong to the different political parties with which we are now going to deal.

Let us begin with the party which has always wielded great influence over the peasants, and is at the present time attempting — though with little success — to regain its former position. We refer to the Sarikat Islam (The Mohammedan Union).

2) Sarikat Islam and the Peasants.

Sarikat Islam is a national-religious organisation which, at the time of its utmost popularity, in 1918, had over two million members, of whom 60—70% were peasants, and only about 10% were tradesmen. The latter, nevertheless, played a leading part in the organisation. In 1911—12 it was known as the Sarikat-Dagan-Islam (The Union of Mohammedan Tradesmen), it being an organisation of the native tradesmen united in order to combat their competitors, notably, the Chinese tradesmen who had been gradually capturing the retail trade. This „commercial character“ of Sarikat-Islam was its inherent nature all along: at many of the congresses of Sarikat-Islam, particularly in 1917 and 1918, many of the delegates transacted their commercial deals after the close of the congress sessions.

Soon, however (in 1912), the name of the organisation was changed into „Sarikat-Islam“, and subsequently (in 1917) it adopted a political (national-democratic) program, because it was perfectly realised by the native bourgeoisie that it needed the support of the masses of workers and peasants in the struggle against the foreign capitalists; — particularly against the Chinese tradesmen who, more than any other class of capitalists, maintained daily personal contact with the masses.

Led by Zokroaminoto, a man of great oratorical gifts but of feeble and fickle character, Sarikat Islam rapidly spread in the course of 1916—18. Of particular service to the party's propaganda among the oppressed religious masses proved to be the Mohammedan watchwords (95% of the Indonesian population are Mohammedans). Branches of Sarikat Islam existed in all the towns and large villages in Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, etc.

Hundreds of elementary schools were opened, in which the Mohammedan religion was taught. In many towns and villages co-operative stores were opened which were to have sold goods, particularly food-stuffs, cheaper than the Chinese tradesmen. But, owing chiefly to the poor organisation of these co-operative stores (too weak was the control exercised by the members) and abused by the leaders, the enterprise ended in failure. The co-operative stores could not successfully compete with the Chinese tradesmen who, by the way, were backed in this struggle by the big Chinese capitalists. One after another, the co-operative stores of Sarikat Islam went out of business.

The program of Sarikat Islam (1917) contained, among other things, the following demands which were beneficial for the peasants:

- 1) Abolition of „Heerendienst“ and other compulsory services, including those imposed by local village authorities.
- 2) State alienation of the so-called „private lands“.
- 3) Tax reductions.
- 4) Improvement and State support of native agriculture, and
- 5) Organisation of rural self-government.

The reformist leaders of Sarikat Islam did however absolutely

nothing for the peasants. They were always ready to use fine phrases and to proclaim Mohammedan watchwords, but they really deceived the workers and the peasants and incited them to actions that were advantageous not to the exploited masses, but to the native bourgeoisie. When it became apparent that the native tradesmen could not successfully compete with their Chinese rivals, who were dominating the retail market, and when the co-operative stores controlled by the native tradesmen were put out of business, they began to incite the masses against the Chinese tradesmen. The time was quite opportune, since at that moment (after the outbreak of the World War) the prices of commodities were continuously rising. In many towns it even came to collisions between the masses and the police, because hundreds of workers and peasants raided and pillaged the Chinese shops and maltreated their owners. Such scenes took place at Jokjakarta, Surakarta, Kudus (in the province of Semarang) and elsewhere. Hundreds of peasants were arrested and sentenced to terms of imprisonment up to 5 years. Moreover, the Sarikat Islam leaders launched the following sham slogan among the peasants: „Down with the usurers! Patriots, lease your fields only to your countrymen!“ Thus the fight against the Chinese usurer was proclaimed in the interest of the native usurer, as though it made any difference to the poor peasant who he was exploited by: Chinese or Hadji.

Soon afterwards, in 1917, a revolutionary opposition grew up with — in the party which was headed by comrades Semaun, Darsono, Marko and others. Very soon the Semarang branch went over to the opposition, and steadily gained in influence. This compelled the bourgeois leaders of the Central Committee to make concessions to the opposition. These same leaders, nevertheless, usually obstructed all the resolutions adopted by the congress, as a result of motions made by the opposition, which were in the interest of the workers and the peasants.

At any rate, pressure being brought to bear by the revolutionary opposition, it was decided to wage a fight against the sugar and tobacco capitalists. In scores of villages co-operative organisations were formed of poor and middle peasants engaged in the cultivation of sugar-cane or tobacco, in order to sell these products to the capitalists at higher prices. In other villages organisations of peasant smallholders were formed, in order to command higher rents for their leased allotments. These organisations, known under various names in different districts — e. g. Rukun Dessa (the Village Union), Rukun Tani (The Peasants' Union), and so on — were founded for the most part in central and eastern Java.

But these organisations were also short-lived: after a year or so, all of them ceased to exist, one after another. The failure was due to their being mismanaged and uncontrolled by the poorer section of its members.

The first signs of the decline of Sarikat Islam made their appearance in 1919. The masses of workers and peasants began to lose faith in the Sarikat Islam leaders because of the embezzlement of funds belonging to the organisation, and general bad work. Dissatisfaction of the masses grew as a result of the post-war high cost of living. The influence of the revolutionary opposition was growing. In 1918—20

many strikes of peasants (who refused to pay taxes and to perform compulsory services) took place in the Semarang, Jakarta and Surakarta provinces.¹⁾ There were collisions with the police; about 200 peasants were arrested and sentenced to terms of imprisonment up to 2 years.

In West Java, in the provinces of Priangan and Batavia, there was a secret organisation formed the majority of whose members consisted of peasants. This revolutionary organisation, — known under the name of „Sarikat Islam, Section B“, and whose members called themselves „soldiers“ of Sarikat Islam, — was discovered by the authorities at the end of 1919, in connection with the bloody events which took place in the village of Zimareme, near Garut (in the province of Priangan). In that village about 40 peasants, led by H. Hassan and H. Hadjali, revolted against the government. This occurred under the following circumstances:

After the end of the war, there was a great increase in the price of rice — the staple food of the population — which was caused, to a large extent, by the profiteering activities of Chinese and Arab tradesmen. The government forced the peasants to surrender to it part of the harvest (as much as they could spare after satisfying their own needs) at fixed prices. This rice was then sold by the government at slightly less inflated prices than those demanded by the Chinese and the Arabs, but they were still from three to four times above the pre-war prices.

It was then that the Zimareme peasants refused to sell their crop to the government, as they could get a better price for it from the Chinese and Arab tradesmen. Their passive resistance was crushed by Dutch troops despatched from Bandung (the capital of the province of Priangan); who, firing into the crowd, killed and wounded 20 peasants, and imprisoned the rest. An investigation was ordered by the authorities to enquire into the cause of the riot, and the action of the officials who ordered the soldiers to fire at the peasants; and incidentally the existence of the secret organisation of „Sarikat Islam Section B“ was discovered. It transpired that this organisation, whose aim was to make preparations of a revolution, had already gained a fairly widespread following. There were about 300 peasants, 50 small tradesmen, as well as a number of intellectuals (teachers, etc.) arrested. The majority of them were sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from six months to 3 years. Ten of the leaders, sentenced to terms of imprisonment from 3½ to 6 years, were deported to other islands, e. g. to Celebes, New Guinea, etc., to serve their sentences.

Propaganda carried on by the Sarikat Islam leaders was responsible for a peasant mutiny breaking out in 1920 at Toli-Toli (central part of Celebes). The mutiny was due to the discontent of the peasants on account of the heavy taxes and „Heerendienst“, which was further aggravated by the high cost of living. A crowd of 200 peasants attacked the „Comptroller“ (the highest government official) De-Kat Anelino and killed him. For this mutiny the peasants had to pay a heavy price. The Dutch soldiers killed and arrested not only the insurgent peasants, but also their wives and children.

1) In the last-named two provinces the peasant movement was led by H. Mizbach, who subsequently joined the Communist Party of Indonesia.

Among other peasant organisation which appeared during this period of general upheaval among the masses under the leadership of Sarikat Islam, were: „Sarikat Aban“ (the Red Union) in the province of Djambi, and „Parhudamdān“ in the province of Tapanuli (Sumatra).

At that time, the peasants of Djambi had not yet begun the cultivation of rubber, while the cultivation of rice, — except in the district of Kurinzi which was very distant from the sea, — was still undeveloped, owing to the lack of proper irrigation; so that the peasants were in a poor state. On the other hand, the taxes imposed upon the peasants, particularly the „Heerendienst“, were rather heavy. Every peasant, in addition to the compulsory services imposed by the village authorities, had to serve „Heerendienst“ for 50 days in the year, and it also took him 2—5 days just to get to his place of work. There were no good roads, and the conscript labourers had to walk across untrodden paths, through unhealthy swamps.

In short, there was fertile soil for revolutionary propaganda. Sarikat Aban made tremendous progress in the course of one year, enrolling thousands of members among the peasants. Already in 1916, a premature revolt of the peasants broke out. Nearly a hundred government officials, including some of the highest Dutch officials, were attacked and killed. But soon repressions set in. Troops were despatched post-haste from Java, and the insurgent peasants were chased through the forests by 15 battalions of soldiers, who burned down numerous villages. Many peasants were killed and wounded, and 500 were arrested and the majority of them sentenced to terms of imprisonment from 3 to 10 years; 12 of them were sentenced to death (by hanging). This heroic encounter was the last of the Sarikat Aban.

Equally short-lived was the peasant organisation of „Parhudamdān“ in the province of Tapanuli. Here also the heavy taxes and „Heerendienst“ were the main reasons for the rapid headway of the organisation, which numbered about 1,000 members. In 1918, the cost of living went up tremendously, and the peasants at Balige refused to pay taxes and to perform the „Heerendienst“. When the Comptroller attempted to address the peasants on this questions, having left his bodyguard of 12 soldiers at some distance, he was attacked and killed. The soldiers afterwards brought reinforcements and arrested about 400 peasants at Balige, and in the village of Taratuna where a similar strike was going on. They were sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from 3 months to 10 years. Those sentenced to long terms were deported to Sava-Lunto (in the central part of Sumatra) to work in the coal mines. These events ended the career of „Parhudamdān“.

The revolutionary wave of 1918—19 began to subside, and since 1920 there was a steady decline in the revolutionary mass movement. The cost of living had gone down; exemption from „Heerendienst“ had been introduced in a number of provinces; the peasants' allies — the industrial workers — by their strikes in 1918—20 gained some increases in wages. Moreover, the government — as we have already seen — had resorted to severe measures against the revolutionary movement. Finally, the masses lost much of their confidence in the leaders, particularly in those of Sarikat Islam. Embezzlement of public funds had become a common occurrence: even the Chairman of the Central Com-

mittee of Sarikat Islam, Zokroaminoto, was charged with embezzling the funds of the organisation.¹⁾

This general decline in the mass movement was noticeable until the beginning of 1923. In spite of all the efforts of the reformist leaders of Sarikat Islam to check the decline of the organisation, and to retain the leadership of the masses, the movement steadily grew weaker. Even the establishment of the „Muhamadiyah“ religious organisation, — which we shall deal with later on, — proved of no avail. Equally futile were the attempts to convene a National (All-Indonesian) Congress. Finally, the efforts to convene a „Peasants' Congress“ with the financial backing of the prominent tobacco capitalist T. Ottolander, ended in complete failure. Hundreds of thousands of peasants did not pay their membership dues, and left the Sarikat-Islam, while many of those who stayed in the organisation gave their allegiance to the revolutionary opposition.

In 1922 the first attempts were made by the government to restore the balance of the country's budget,²⁾ while the capitalists started an offensive on the working conditions of the workers. The consequences of the imperialist war were having their baneful effect upon the economic situation of Indonesia. The war caused a crisis in industry, particularly in sugar production; it also upset the financial equilibrium of the country. The employers and the capitalist government were nevertheless forced by the revolutionary movement to make temporary concessions to the exploited masses.

Since 1922, the government began to carry out the so-called „regime of economy“, introducing some new taxes, including the aforesaid „Verpondingbelasting“ (a tax on house properties in towns and villages), increasing the stamp duty, postal operations, and so on.

The „regime of economy“ was carried out chiefly at the expense of the public services, such as public education, public health, rural economy, and so on. This resulted in thousands of employees being thrown out of work (teachers, railwaymen,³⁾ employees of the irrigation establishments, etc.). This did not stop the government, however, from working out a new project to augment the naval forces which necessitated an expenditure of tens of millions of florins of the people's money.

1923 saw the exploited masses of Indonesia on the move once more. There was a revival of the proletarian, peasant, national and religious movements. There was also a revival of Sarikat-Islam, in which the chief part was played by the revolutionary workers and peasants. In many towns and villages new branches of Sarikat-Islam were formed, but it was already the so-called „Red Sarikat-Islam“ which put itself in opposition to the Central Committee and rallied around the Semarang branch led by the Communists.

The reformist leaders of Sarikat-Islam were jumping out of their skins in their endeavours to crush the revolutionary opposition. Seeing that the revolutionary opposition was growing in spite of all their

1) The principal prosecutor was Comrade Darsono.

2) The State expenses were considerably in excess over the revenues.

3) Most of the railways in Indonesia are run by the government.

efforts, they convened an emergency congress at Madiun (Java) in the early part of 1923. They had every reason to fear that they would have to surrender the control over Sarikat-Islam to the revolutionary leaders, as the latter already had a majority. For this reason they organised the congress in such a manner that many of the revolutionary leaders were unable to attend, while the red branches were invited to the congress after a considerable delay. The reformist leaders thus scored a „victory“ at the Madiun congress, by having their proposal accepted for the formation of a „disciplined party“, and at that congress Sarikat-Islam was renamed into the „Sarikat-Islam Party“. The term „disciplined party“ meant that the members of the „Sarikat-Islam Party“ could not be members of any other political organisation. The communists in the Sarikat-Islam organisation — (all the revolutionaries are considered as Communists) — thus became subject to expulsion.

Nearly a month after this decision was reached by the Madiun congress, the Communist Party of Indonesia and the red branches of Sarikat-Islam held a joint congress at Bandun (West Java) — (which we shall deal with later on) — where a resolution was carried, among others, renaming the red branches of Sarikat-Islam into „Sarikat-Raiat“ (Union of the People). They thus definitely broke away from the „Sarikat-Islam Party“, divesting the latter of about two-thirds of its membership. Since then the party rapidly declined, so that at the present time it can no longer be described as a mass organisation.

In many of the Sarikat-Islam branches there were flagrant cases of embezzlement by its leaders. The disintegration of the Sarikat-Islam Party was accelerated by the progress of Sarikat-Raiat, which absorbed all the members that were abandoning the Sarikat-Islam organisation. In some of the Sarikat-Islam branches the members are grouped around individual leaders who are fighting each other, as for instance, at Garut (West Java) where one section led by Suroso is at loggerheads with another section led by Muis. The „Sarikat-Islam Party“ has now only a few branches in several districts of Java, but none on the other islands of Indonesia. The Party has now altogether about 7—8 thousand members, mostly consisting of tradesmen, wealthy peasants, and very religious persons. This organisation pays almost no attention to political questions, but is busily engaged in religious questions. There was recently yet another attempt to revive the „Sarikat-Islam Party“. The Moslem Congress held at Cairo and Mecca (for the restoration of the Caliphate) had given some encouragement to the reformist leaders. A „united front“ was formed with the religious organisations of „Muhamadiyah“ and „Umat-Islam“ (followers of Islam), and the chairman of the Central Committee of the Sarikat-Islam Party, accompanied by two other members of the Party, went to Mecca to take part in the Moslem Congress. They described themselves as the „delegation of the Indonesian Mohammedans“, but actually they represent only about 20,000 Indonesian Mohammedans of the following three organisations: Sarikat-Islam, Muhammadiyah and Umat-Islam; while there are about five times more Indonesian Mohammedans in such revolutionary organisations as Sarikat-Raiat, and about 45 millions Mohammedans in Indonesia.

We do not think that these efforts of the reformists are likely to revive the „Sarikat-Islam Party“.

3) Origin and Organisation of the Present Movement of the Peasants.

The masses of the Indonesian peasants are at present organised in Sarikat-Raiat (Union of the People) which has grown out of the revolutionary opposition in Sarikat-Islam. From the very beginning, the progress of Sarikat-Raiat has been closely connected with that of the Communist Party, as the communists have always led this organisation. Therefore, in order to understand the present movement of the peasants in Indonesia, it is absolutely necessary to make a preliminary study of the Communist Party of Indonesia, and particularly of the questions relating to its tactics in regard to the peasantry.

The Communist Party of Indonesia has grown out of the Social Democratic Union (Indische Social-Demokratische Vereeniging) founded in 1915. In 1920, the Social Democratic Union joined the Communist International and assumed the name of the Communist Party of Indonesia. We have already mentioned that the revolutionary leaders of the Social Democratic Union of Indonesia had been active in Sarikat-Islam already since 1917. In organising strikes of workers and peasants, they placed themselves in opposition to the reformist leaders of the organisation. The influence of the revolutionary leaders of the Social Democratic Union of Indonesia was steadily growing, particularly since 1919, when the influence of the reformist leaders began to wane.

The decision of the Madiun congress of Sarikat-Islam, compelling the communists to leave the Sarikat-Islam organisation, placed before the Communist Party of Indonesia the necessity of declaring definitely its attitude towards the peasantry, and generally towards the national-religious revolutionary movement embodied in the red branches of Sarikat-Islam. Instead of doing this, the Communist Party turned into a sort of „populist“ and left-wing organisation. From a historical standpoint it is perfectly explicable; nevertheless this failure of clearly defining its position led to grave consequences, as we shall shortly see. Therefore, at the joint congress of the Communist Party and the red organisations of Sarikat-Islam, held in March 1923 at Bandun and Sukabumi, it was resolved that the red branches of Sarikat-Islam should in future be known as „Sarikat-Raiat“ (Union of the People). These local organisations have no central committee, but they constitute the substructure of the Communist Party. They have no program of their own, but they adhere to the latter's program, which, among other things, contains the following points:

1. Distribution of the „private lands“ and of the „native kingdoms“ among the peasants.
2. Rebate of taxes for those with small incomes.
3. Formation of co-operative peasant organisations.
4. Formation of village councils; the right of dismissing the village elder.

The congress of the Communist Party constitutes at the same time the congress of Sarikat-Raiat, but at this congress the Sarikat-Raiat may only have a third of all the votes. Sarikat-Raiat is not only orga-

nisationally connected with the Communist Party, but is also ideologically under the strong influence of the latter. Thus, there is a communist program for an organisation in which 50% of the members consist of poor and middle peasants, and about 25% of small proprietors, tradesmen, artisans, etc. As we shall soon see, this fact unmistakably creates serious obstacles to the development of this organisation.

4) Clash between Revolution and Reaction in 1923—24.

Thanks to the revolutionary situation and the energetic activity of the communist leaders, who took good advantage of the latter for the vital everyday interests of the large masses of the exploited, Sarikat-Raiat began to display greater activities. They began a vigorous campaign against the heavy taxes, against the trickery and iniquitous deeds of the village elders, against usury, and so on. Everywhere, elementary schools were opened under the auspices of Sarikat-Raiat, which have become very popular, even were it only for the reason that there were very few government schools. Thanks to this activity, great progress was made by Sarikat-Raiat, particularly since the strike of 12,000 Javanese railwaymen in May, 1923. This strike was of a political character, as it broke out in connection with the arrest of Com. Semaun, the chairman of the railwaymen's union and an organiser of Sarikat-Raiat. Out of several thousand railwaymen who were discharged after the strike was suppressed, a few hundred became active propagandists for Sarikat-Raiat. Since that time, Sarikat-Raiat has been steadily growing, in spite of the ever-increasing rigour of the reaction. Branches of Sarikat-Raiat were formed everywhere — in Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, Timor, and so on. There are branches with 3,000 and 4,000 members (Pandanpandjan and Solo, respectively). At the height of its development, that is during the first half of 1925, Sarikat-Raiat had about 100,000 members, in addition to hundreds of thousands of sympathisers, who frequently rendered secret assistance.

There was a considerable number of newspapers and periodical publications edited by communists and Sarikat-Raiat leaders. Apart from the periodical publications of the Red Trade Unions, and of periodical publications which had a short existence (due either to financial straits or to the imprisonment of their editors), we shall mention only the following among the more important organs of the press:

„Niala“ (The Spark, in Malayan), organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Indonesia, published at Batavia; „Api“ (Fire), joint organ of the Communist Party and Sarikat-Raiat at Semaran; „Proletar“, a newspaper published at Surabaya; „Movo“ (The Spark, in Javanese), a joint communist and Sarikat-Raiat newspaper published at Solo; „Titar“ (The Alarm), formerly called „Surapati“ (Fear Not Death), published at Bandun; „Medan Muslimin“ (The Mohammedan Battlefield), a Mohammedan propagandist paper published at Solo, and „Pemandanan-Islam“ (The Mohammedan Review), published at Padan.

After the outbreak of the railwaymen's strike a new clause was inserted by the government in the Penal Code, providing for severe penalties for strike propaganda directed against the existing economic order. An agitator may be sentenced to imprisonment up to 5 years.

This clause has been worded so elastically that in practice it may declare any strike illegal.

On August 31st, 1923, there were manifestations by anarchists. On that day, when the Dutch bourgeoisie in Indonesia was celebrating the Queen's birthday, bombs were thrown at Semeran, Solo and Madiun, killing and wounding a score of Dutch, Chinese and natives. 24 communists and Sarikat-Raiat members were arrested, including comrade Mizbach. After vainly trying for eight months to frame up a case, the government was forced to release the prisoners, with the exception of comrade Mizbach. The latter was deported to Manukuari (New Guinea), since his presence in Java was deemed a peril to public order.

The growth of Sarikat-Raiat has been a source of alarm to the imperialist bourgeoisie, and it has been incessantly looking for new means to check it. Apart from the usual repressive measures, such as the forbidding of public meetings in some towns, provocation by spies and police, prosecution of revolutionary speakers, and editors, and so on, the government resorted to the restriction of the liberty of travelling in the country. Thus, for instance, an inhabitant of Java must have a passport to travel to Celebes or Borneo; an inhabitant of West Sumatra may not travel without a passport to Atjeh (North Sumatra), and so on. Naturally, communists and Sarikat-Raiat members are denied passports. By this method, it is sought to restrict the propaganda of the Communist Party and of Sarikat-Raiat in those districts where they have as yet no organisations, or their organisations are weak.

Another method to check the growth of Sarikat-Raiat consists in the deportation of revolutionaries to their respective native provinces. In this manner it is sought to prevent the possibility of revolutionary activity by comrades arriving from „foreign“ provinces. Such deportations frequently take place in the provinces of Atjeh where, as we have already seen, peasant insurrections are frequent. In these provinces there are numerous comrades from other provinces. In the course of 1925 there were about 30 comrades deported from Atjeh to West Sumatra. But these deportations result only in deporting propagandist activity to other provinces. Thus, the number of propagandists has increased in the latter provinces, and the government is now compelled to deport them to other places. In 1925 the Communist Party and Sarikat-Raiat have increased numerically to such an extent in the provinces of West Sumatra, that the government deemed it necessary to deport two active leaders, H. Batuh and H. Seinudien, to the central part of Timor.

The government is also considerably worried over the energetic work of Sarikat-Raiat leaders in opening elementary schools where the children get a revolutionary education,¹⁾ and are taught to love freedom, to be brave and to hate injustice; where they are taught to sing revolutionary songs, like the „Internationale“, and so on.

A new law was therefore enacted by the government, requiring all teachers in the Sarikat-Raiat schools to furnish certificates of „loyalty“; moreover, a rigid control has been established over these

1) Such schools were opened at the close of 1921 in the districts where red branches of Sarikat-Islam existed. The organiser of these schools, comrade Tan Malakka, was deported in 1922 to Kupan (Timor). Subsequently he was permitted to leave Indonesia.

schools. If the government inspector discovers any revolutionary education work in any of these schools, the authorities either dismiss the teacher or close down the school.

A movement of protest took place at the close of 1924, when the government ordered the closing of over 50 Sarikat-Raiat schools, in which not only Sarikat-Raiat members, but also the parents of the school children participated. Approximately in 40 villages protest meetings were held against this reactionary measure. In some villages the meetings were forbidden and dispersed by the police; in a score of villages it came to clashes with the police, e. g. at Sumedan, Bandun, Tasikmalaia, Cialis, Sidomulio etc., although the communists avoided police provocation. In connection with these events a score of people were killed, 300 wounded, and 600 arrested. The majority of the prisoners were sentenced to terms of imprisonment from 1 month to 6 years.

In February, 1924, a revolt of peasants broke out at Taneran (near Batavia, on the northern shore of Java). The peasants living there on the „private lands“ are exceedingly poor, as the taxes, particularly the „zukei“ (a tax in favour of the large landowners), are extremely heavy. For this reason the majority of the peasants in those districts have to engage in hat-making in their spare time. At the end of 1923, prices on these hats dropped, and the peasants earned only 3 cents a day instead of the former 5 cents. Under such circumstances the propaganda of Sarikat-Raiat, carried on under a religious guise, proved highly successful. The peasants, led by the Mohammedan clergy, rose against the landowners and demanded a reduction in taxes. In a collision with the police 40 peasants and several policemen were killed, and 200 peasants arrested. They were sentenced to terms of imprisonment from 6 months to 5 years.

5) Conference of Communist Party and Sarikat-Raiat in December, 1924. Peasant Tactics of the Communist Party of Indonesia.

Sarikat Raiat (the People's Union), as was already said, is closely connected with the Communist Party of Indonesia, the „populist“, and the left wing deviations being very strong in the ranks of the Indonesian communists. It is true that, in the Communist Party's program, there are several points relating specifically to the peasants; but its leaders and those of Sarikat Raiat have never conducted a clear-cut policy in regard to the peasants. The question of the peasantry has never been discussed with due thoroughness and gravity. Very little has been written in the newspapers and in the periodic press about the peasantry and its condition. Only in the last six months did some change in this respects take place. Nevertheless, the leaders of the Communist Party and of Sarikat Raiat are still devoting too little attention to the peasant question, and this in a country where 70% of the population are peasants!

Of tremendous importance was the fact that the joint conference of the Communist Party and of Sarikat Raiat held at Jokja in December 1924, engaged its attention, in discussing the tactics to be used in regard to Sarikat-Raiat, and also touched upon — although in a very superficial manner — the peasant question. At that conference a

radical proposal was moved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party: to dissolve the Sarikat Raiat organisation and to create a peasant co-operative organisation. The Central Committee gave the following reasons for this motion.

1). The majority of the Sarikat Raiat members being peasants, and 25% of the membership being tradesmen, artisans, etc., the Central Committee was apprehensive of the possibility of the middle class ideology of Sarikat Raiat penetrating into the Communist Party, — it therefore proposed this motion for the purpose of creating a purely proletarian party.

2). In the political struggle the peasantry did not constitute a revolutionary element (!); in the political struggle it was „impotent“. The peasants could not efficiently be organised into a political party, since it was difficult to find common interests between the peasants and the other groups of the members of Sarikat Raiat. The peasants were interested only in economic questions directly affecting them, not in political questions. Therefore, the Central Committee urged, that the peasants should be organised on co-operative lines.

This proposal of the Central Committee met with determined opposition on the part of the majority of the delegates. The most serious opposition was offered by the Semeran branch headed by comrade Darsono. It is interesting that the opposition did not deny the first argument raised by the Central Committee, neither did it dwell on the question of the peasantry. The majority of the opposition spoke against the motion on the grounds that this measure would result in the Central Committee losing contact with the masses.

Finally, the motion of the Central Committee was rejected, and the conference adopted the following resolution:

Sarikat Raiat was to remain as it was; but an effort should be made to attract into the Communist Party the proletarian elements of the members of Sarikat Raiat, while the peasants should be organised on co-operative lines, without forming any new branches. Thus, Sarikat Raiat would die a natural death.

The motion of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the decision of the conference, which were really the result of a compromise between the Central Committee and the opposition, indicate that the national-revolutionary movement represented by Sarikat Raiat, and particularly the role played by the peasantry in this movement were underrated. The conference's decision was certainly a wrong one, since it did not furnish a proper line of policy for the development of the national-revolutionary movement, in order to mobilise the oppressed native middle class for a struggle against imperialism; nor did it indicate a way of effecting good relations between the proletarian movement and the peasantry.

Without a clear conception of the various tendencies existing in the Indonesian Communist Party and in Sarikat Raiat (which shall later be dealt with), it is impossible to understand how such a cumbersome decision could have been adopted.

6) Resolution of Comintern Plenum held in 1925.

As it might have been expected, the discussion which had taken place at the above mentioned conference attracted particular attention of the Comintern Plenum in 1925. In the Plenum's resolution on the Indonesian Communist Party, it was plainly pointed out that the latter had not yet developed into a purely proletarian party — (since Sarikat Raiat was closely connected with it). The resolution went on to say that Sarikat Raiat should be separated from the Communist Party and turned into an organisation with a clear-cut national-revolutionary program containing, among other things, points that are of interest both to the workers and the peasants. Moreover, the resolution laid stress on the need of organising the peasants on co-operative lines.

A protest against this resolution was entered in by the Central Committee of the Indonesian Communist Party. In the meantime, new events occurred which rendered simple application of the aforesaid resolution — particularly in regard to transforming Sarikat Raiat into a national-revolutionary party — impossible, because both the Communist Party and Sarikat Raiat then became illegal organisations. The resolution therefore so far remained a dead letter.

7) The Revolutionary Movement and the White Terror During 1925.

Regardless of the decision of the aforesaid conference, and in spite of the ever-increasing reaction, the Communist Party of Indonesia and the Sarikat Raiat and the red trade unions were steadily growing in 1925. The capitalist government, seeing the futility of all its measures for the suppression of the revolutionary movement, began to resort to even harsher measures. In the beginning of 1925 the police officials, financed by the government and tobacco and tea capitalists, etc., organised fascist bands under the name of „Sarikat Hidzo“ (Green Union). These officials organised meetings of bandits, loafers and ignorant peasants. At those meetings all kind of vicious stories were told about the communists and about the Sarikat Raiat members, which furnished the alleged reason for the formation of Sarikat Hidzo, whose only object was to fight against the Communist Party and Sarikat Raiat.

From time to time, these bands (in groups of 10—20) organised raids on the reds in the towns and villages. They stoned and burned the houses of revolutionaries, inflicted bodily injuries on the latter, compelled them to flee, or killed them. For this „work“ the members of Sarikat Hidzo received wages from 50 cents to 2 florins per day. Such organisations were formed in most of the provinces of Java, particularly in the western part. Stunned at first by these new tactics of the reactionaries, the Indonesian revolutionaries soon rallied and began to adapt their methods to the new situation. They formed the „Anti-Ribut-Bond“ (the Anti-Ruffian-Union) whose object is to counteract the terrorist activities of Sarikat Hidzo. The members of Anti-Ribut-Bond are not only revolutionaries, but also unorganised workers and peasants dissatisfied with the terrorist activities of Sarikat Hidzo. Moreover, nuclei were formed by militant communists within the Sarikat Hidzo, in order to carry on propaganda from within. Thus the struggle

against Sarikat Hidzo was being carried on both from within and without.

In many towns and villages friction occurred within the Sarikat Hidzo organisations themselves, notably at Bandun, Dsepara, Semaran, Bandzaran, etc. In some towns its members turned red, and demanded increased wages, or left it to join the Sarikat Raiat.

In the campaign against Sarikat Hidzo the following amusing incident took place.

Several members of Anti-Ribut-Bond, in the large village of Bandzarian, hid themselves in the trees in order to ambush a group of Sarikat Hidzo members. After sunset, a group of about 15 Sarikat Hidzo members arrived who proceeded to throw stones at the homes of Sarikat Raiat members, shouting that if the red devils would not turn white they would die. The Anti-Ribut-Bond members, themselves hidden in the trees, shot arrows into the bandits, and with such good effect that the latter, unable to cope with the invisible enemy, soon fled. A few months afterwards Sarikat Hidzo ceased to exist. These tactics of the capitalists, far from bringing about the expected results, only added to the revolutionary experience of the reds.

Strikes and demonstrations of peasants took place in 1925 at Kupan (Timor) and at Maninjo (West Sumatra).

At Kupan, which is still ruled by the native princes, the peasants refused to perform „Heerendienst“ and other compulsory services. They organised a demonstration and demanded the abolition of these services. Collisions occurred with the police and troops; and 269 members of Sarikat Raiat and several hundred non-partisan peasants were arrested. The local leader of Sarikat Raiat, Comrade Pandi, was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment.

At Maninjo, the peasants also refused to perform the „Heerendienst“. Sarikat Raiat was very strong in that place. Once, the police raided the premises of the Sarikat Raiat committee and, among other things, confiscated its membership list. Troops from Padan-Panjan then arrived who arrested 1,544 members. The peasants who paid up their taxes and performed „Heerendienst“ were sentenced to imprisonment from 3 to 15 days, according to the degree of resistance they offered to the police; they were apparently punished only because they were members of Sarikat Raiat. The peasants who did not pay taxes, or failed to perform „Heerendienst“, were sentenced from 15 days to 3 months imprisonment. Finally, those peasants who refused both to pay taxes and to perform the „Heerendienst“ were sentenced to terms of six months imprisonment, while the local Sarikat Raiat leaders were deported to the central part of Sumatra for several years of hard labour in the coal mines.

Almost simultaneously strikes of peasants occurred in the village of Kalizazin, — situated in the province of Semaran, — which were of a peculiar form of obstruction to the authorities. It was a unique way of showing the government that they realised that the election of the village elder was merely a governmental dodge, and that the village elders were merely government officials who oppress them.

The peasants of this village deliberately elected an idiot as their elder. The latter once appeared before the Zamat (the highest govern-

mental official), clad only in short knickers, and began to shout that he was now the elder of the village of Kalizazin and wished to marry the Dutch Queen, for which performance he was persecuted by the police. Such obstruction was possible because all the peasants of the village were members of Sarikat Raiat. The government was helpless against this obstruction: the election was several times declared void by the provincial governor, but each new election brought the same result. Eventually, the government appointed an elder from among the residents of another village, and the latter, with the aid of police agents, inflicted severe punishment on the daring village which refused to pay taxes while waiting for the new elder.

Although of a local character, this event was nevertheless a serious warning to the government. It gradually dawned on the capitalists that the continuous growth of the Communist Party and Sarikat Raiat and their followers constituted a serious menace to their power. Attempted assassination of government officials and petty native rulers continued, notably at Bandun and Solo.

The red trade unions continued to make headway in 1925. Under the effect of the events in China, the red trade unions began to take the offensive against the capitalists. In August, 1925, a dockers' strike broke out in Semaran, followed by similar strikes at Zilazap Belavan, Padan, Sibolga and Makasar. In September, a strike of hospital employees broke out in Batavia and Semaran, a strike of printers in Semaran, Surabaya, Batavia, Jokja, and so on. Last December, there were strikes of metal and maritime workers at Surabaya, while in other places workers on the sugar plantations and in the factories struck (at Tugulanin, Sherebon, etc.). On the whole, there were about 10,000 people on strike, the majority of which were crushed by the government by terrorist means.

The peasants actively supported the strikers both materially (offering food and shelter to the victimised strikers who had been discharged and driven from their homes) as well as by their activity in the Sarikat Raiat. Many mass meetings were held by this organisation last year; village meetings were frequently attended by crowds of 1,000 to 3,000 people, as for instance, in the provinces of Semaran, Banuvani and Padan-Panjan. Regardless of terrorism by the police, who interfered with meetings, and arrested the speakers, Sarikat Raiat continued its activity, at the same time avoiding a collision. In this it did not always succeed, and in many towns there were collisions, e. g. at Malan, in which several policemen and a score of peasants were killed.

Moreover, in the closing months of 1925, other serious events happened. It transpired that, in spite of the strictest vigilance, there were members of Sarikat Raiat and communists among the soldiers in the army. Nearly every week many soldiers were discharged; soldiers' strikes took place at Jokja and Batavia (a battalion of soldiers refused to return to camp until their wages were increased). At Malan it was discovered that the „Taman Kemajaun“ (an organisation for education and study) was being made use of for communist propaganda among the soldiers. A score of soldiers were discharged, and about a hundred members of this educational organisation were arrested.

In the course of the above-described strikes it was also discovered that several scores of police agents were members of Sarikat Raiat and of the Communist Party. This resulted in the dismissal of 40 police agents at Surabayaia and 20 at Semaran.

All this compelled the government to devise new measures. In all the towns and villages where branches of the Communist Party, Sarikat Raiat, or of the red trade unions existed, they were raided by the police who not only confiscated the membership lists and the funds (which happened, for instance, at Semaran), but also photographed all the known members of these organisations. The police then proceeded to tamper with the mail addressed to revolutionaries, and more vigorous persecution was instituted against the editors of communist papers. Among the new measures of persecution were the confiscation of newspapers and lists of subscribers, the prohibition of reading revolutionary newspapers on the pain of dismissal, and so on. At the close of 1925 comrades Ali Arham, Darsono¹⁾ and Marjohan were deported by the government to Okaba (on the southern coast of New Guinea). Finally, a new law was promulgated in December forbidding all meetings of the Indonesian Communist Party and of Sarikat Raiat on the islands of Java, Modora, Sumatra, Celebes, Ternati, etc. This prohibition has practically speaking affected the whole of Indonesia, since meetings are permitted only on those islands where no organisations of the Communist Party and of Sarikat Raiat are in existence, and where the population is still unorganised.

It was during such strenuous times that „Sarikat Tani“ (the Peasants' Union), was founded in such places where no branches of Sarikat Raiat existed, and where Sarikat Raiat had been disorganised by the reaction. Within a few months the government prohibited also the meetings of Sarikat Tani, of the nuclei of the Young Communist League, and of the red trade unions led by communists, e. g. the unions of metal workers, railwaymen, printers, post and telegraph employees, petroleum workers, sugar workers, seamen, hospital employees, motor drivers, and so on.

The ban on public meetings is being carried out with great severity. All the active comrades are constantly tracked by 2—4 spies. If more than two people meet (even if it be only a chance encounter) it is considered by the police as a secret meeting, which is punishable by several years imprisonment. Only two comrades are permitted to work in the offices of the Communist Party and of Sarikat Raiat. If a worker or a peasant has a family gathering at his house — say, a wedding party, — the police and the spies watch against its being utilised by revolutionaries for meeting purposes. This is done even at funerals. In a word, the police and the spies are on the lookout everywhere where revolutionaries could meet. On considering any gathering suspicious, they immediately disperse it and arrest the reds.

Thus, the revolutionary movement in Indonesia is virtually upon an illegal footing. The Communist Party, Sarikat Raiat, Sarikat Tani and the red trade unions are legal organisations only on paper.

1) Comrade Darsono was since permitted to leave Indonesia (instead of deportation to Okaba),

8) Sarikat Tani (The Peasants' Union).

In spite of the efforts of the joint conference of the Communist Party and Sarikat Raiat (in 1924) to detach the Communist Party from the middle class elements that are in the Sarikat Raiat, these elements are approaching more and more closely the communist position. At the present time Sarikat Raiat is even more closely connected with the Communist Party. Owing to the imprisonment and deportation of hundreds of revolutionaries, many of the surviving leaders of the Communist Party are at the same time members of the respective district committees of Sarikat Raiat. We find that in spite of the decision of the aforesaid conference and in spite of the transfer of many workers from Sarikat Raiat to the Communist Party, the membership of the latter has increased from 3,000 to 9,000. Thus Sarikat Raiat has grown more into a peasants' union, particularly in Java and Sumatra.

In the other districts, instead of the co-operative peasant organisations decided upon by the conference of 1924, there the Sarikat Tani was formed at the close of 1925, consisting of local organisations constructed on similar lines to the Sarikat Raiat branches (being a political party adhering to the Communist Party of Indonesia). The only difference is that the membership of Sarikat Tani are entirely peasants, so that in its activity it confines itself to questions that are of particular interest to the peasants, e.g. campaigns for reduced taxes, against compulsory services and abuses by village elders, etc.

Sarikat Tani embraces not only the poor, but also the middle peasants. It has proved a very active organisation. At Lubuk-Basun (West Sumatra) 1,500 members of the organisation held a demonstration against the „Heerendienst“, — the demonstrators carrying stones for the building of a new Sarikat Raiat school. At Pankajne and Maros the peasants held demonstrations in front of the government comptroller's house, protesting against the new community tax (Adat-gemeenschap). Sarikat Tani is also showing great activity in Java, where its membership is growing. The first actions of Sarikat Tani were replied to by strong measures on the part of the government: the leaders of the organisation (including Comrade Arabukar of Makasar and Comrade Rubin of Bekesai) were arrested, and its meetings prohibited.

9) Latest Events.¹⁾

The illegal period in the revolutionary movement of Indonesia began with a series of peasant revolts. In the beginning of the present year, 1926, under the influence of Sarikat Raiat propaganda, two peasant rebellions took place in the provinces of Azeh (North Sumatra), Tapatuan and Bakunian, and a little later in Kruen Batu. As already stated (in chapter two), these rebellions were caused by the peasants in those districts not being permitted to pay their exemption from the Heerendienst as it was done in other districts, and by the very heavy burden of taxation. In the course of those rebellions 40 soldiers and several superior officers were killed.

In March, 1926, a peasant rebellion broke out at Tarub (in the province of Pekalongan). There, the peasants refused to pay taxes and to

¹⁾ This was written in June, 1926.

perform different compulsory services. The government officials and police who arrived at Tarub „to teach the peasants a lesson“, were attacked and wounded by a crowd of 200 peasants. On the following day troops arrived from Sukabuni and Semaran, who arrested about 125 peasants.

During the same month peasants and police clashed at Solo. In that town, religious sentiment is still strong, and our comrades worked there, — meetings being prohibited, — in the religious organisation of Marzi Harjo, whose members consist mostly of peasants. The organisation flourished, and nearly every evening scores of „Mui Alimin“ (religious gatherings) were organised in various parts of the town. At those gatherings, — which usually lasted from 9 p. m. until 1 p. m., and where the Koran was read and religious hymns were sung, frequent references were made to Rajah Firon (a historical figure of a tyrant mentioned in the Koran) and his evil deeds were interpreted in such a manner that those in attendance could well understand that the reference was rather to the evil deeds of the Indonesian government. Soon the government put a ban on the Mohammedan meetings; this new measure caused tremendous discontent among the large numbers of Mohammedans. On Friday (the sacred day of the Mohammedans), a great demonstration was held after divine service in the Mosque, outside the house of the chief of the town at Solo, demanding the recall of the prohibition on religious gatherings. The police, under a shower of stones, dispersed the crowd and arrested a score of people.

On May 1st, 1926, the new law against the revolutionary press came into force. This new law added two new clauses to the penal code:

Article 153 a): Anyone who either by word of mouth or in writing, or by means of signs or allegories, or in disguised or indirect manner, shall deliberately incite to disturb or overthrow the social order, or to attacks upon representatives of the state in Indonesia or in Holland, shall be punished by not more than 6 years imprisonment or by a fine of not more than 300 florins.

Article 153 b): provides for a penalty of 5 years imprisonment or of a fine of not more than 300 florins for anyone distributing such literature, or publicly exhibiting such art images.

Here is a sample of Dutch legislation in Indonesia, a sample of a parody on democratic legislation, a brilliant demonstration of the hypocritical nature of bourgeois democracy.

Under these new articles of law it is next to impossible to write anything without running the risk of transgressing against the law. In consequence of this, as well as of other terrorist measures by the government, the number of comrades capable of editing a communist newspaper has been greatly depleted.¹⁾ This has rendered impossible the existence of a legal press catering to the needs of the revolutionary movement. One by one, „Api“, „Proletar“, „Titir“, „Movo“, „Niala“, and „Medan Muslimin“ have stopped publication. The white terror is continuing to rage in Indonesia: discharges, imprisonments, provocations, etc. are every day occurrences.

1) Comrade Mizbach died in the beginning of June, 1926, at Manukura (New Guinea) whither he was banished in 1924.

In spite of all this, our comrades are not relaxing their brave struggle. The successes of the party and of Sarikat Raiat leave nothing to be desired.

In spite of their terrorist measures, the Indonesian authorities are constantly in fear of rebellion or strikes. Their press is sounding the alarm. The sugar capitalists have distributed rifles among their European employees; at Surubaia a „Burgerwacht“ (a civil militia) was formed of citizens volunteering their services in case of conflicts between the government and the population.

It should be confessed that the capitalist government has indeed every reason to sound the alarm, even if only because communist propaganda among the soldiers is now far more successful than it was ever before.

CHAPTER FOUR.

OTHER POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS, AND THE PEASANTS.

1) Budi-Utomo and the Peasants.

Although Budi-Utomo (A Better Future), a nationalist organisation of intellectuals, has already been founded in 1908, — that is, before Sarikat-Islam and other nationalist organisations, — it was only in recent years that it began to take up the question of the peasantry. At first, it had occupied itself exclusively with educational questions. Later on, in 1917, it became a political organisation. Its program was that of democratic liberalism containing, among other points, the following demands:

1. The fixing of a minimum rent for the peasants' land by legislative enactments (the capitalists are paying too little for the use of this land).
2. Measures against usury.
3. Reforming the „Desalumbungi“ (rice banks) in the interest of the population.
4. Tax rebates on small incomes.
5. Encouragement of agricultural education.

These demands, however, remained only on paper; the reformist leaders of Budi-Utomo had never put up a serious fight for these demands. Since 1922, as a result of the „regime of economy“ enforced by the government, there was a reduction in the salaries of the great majority of the employees, who are members of Budi-Utomo. When the intellectuals could no longer find sufficiently remunerative positions, when, consequently, the proletarianisation of the native intelligentsia began, a revolutionary opposition in Budi-Utomo sprang up which was steadily growing in strength. Finally, at the Jokja congress in 1924¹⁾ the

1) *Perhimpunan Indonesia* (The Indonesia Union), a nationalist-revolutionary organisation of Indonesian students in Holland, is exercising great influence on the development of the revolutionary movement in Indonesia. At the present time it is exercising a decisive influence on the revolutionary development of Budi-Utomo. Members of the „Perhimpunan Indonesia“, on returning to Indonesia, join the various political organisations; three of its members are at present serving upon the central committee of Budi-Utomo.

revolutionary opposition gained the upper hand, and a radical central committee of the Budi-Utomo was elected.

Since that time Budi-Utomo began to work out policies in the interest of the masses, and to engage more in questions affecting the interests of the peasantry; it particularly contributed to the emigration of peasants from over-populated districts to such places where vacant land was available.

But Budi-Utomo was still unable to follow the revolutionary course, since the moderate opposition was still strong. At its last congress at Solo in May 1926, however, Budi-Utomo at last definitely decided to adopt the revolutionary course. A resolution was adopted at that congress in favour of the policy of non-cooperation¹⁾ (with the government), so that it will no longer be represented upon the different councils created by the alien government. As regards the tactics to be adopted in view of the governmental terror, a resolution was carried that Budi-Utomo should no longer be a political party, but be considered in future as a „public organisation“. It is also worthy of note that at that congress of the party, which was beginning to run along revolutionary lines, a good deal of attention was devoted to the economic position of the peasantry, with particular reference to the transference of the communal property of rural land into private property of the peasants, to the emigration of peasants to other islands, and finally, to the formation of peasant cooperative organisations. For the latter purpose a special fund was raised forthwith at the congress. It is interesting that such well-known communist leaders as comrade Marko and the Sarikat-Raiat leader of Solo were freely permitted to address that congress.

The white terror, however, is directed not only against the Communist Party and the organisations led by it, but also against the national-revolutionary movement. According to latest reports, several leaders of Budi-Utomo-Slamet, Dr. Sutomo, Dr. Satiman, Iskak and Suiudi — are being subjected to police persecution on account of their utterances at the above mentioned congress, where they urged the need for the policy of non-cooperation.

That a split will sooner or later take place in Budi-Utomo, is quite obvious. The reformist elements, consisting mostly of government

1) This non-cooperation policy of the Indonesian nationalists differs from that of the nationalist in British India. Hatta, the chairman of Perhimpunan Indonesia, in a speech delivered on January 17, 1926, and published in a pamphlet entitled „Contending Forces in the World's Economic Field“, said among other things:

„Our policy of non-cooperation has quite a different character from the policy usually associated with the name of Mahatma Ghandi. The latter concentrates his policy upon so-called passive resistance, which harmonizes with the religious nature of the Hindoo people; whereas we are laying stress upon active resistance, as we cannot afford to be passive if we do not wish to be crushed. Our policy of non-cooperation coincides with Ghandi's policy only in that we also decline any political cooperation with the usurpers. In our national struggle we are definitely committed to activity . . . „(p. 22). And lower down, on p. 23: „In our policy we must move in the direction of creating a state within the state.“

employees, will no doubt quit this organisation,) and Budi-Utomo will then become a truly national-revolutionary organisation, probably destined to play an important role in the near future.

2) Muhamadiyah and the Peasants.

This Mohammedan religious organisation was founded in 1920, when Sarikat-Islam (the Moslem Union) began to decline. Its reformist leaders tried to find support in this organisation against the revolutionary opposition, and subsequently against the Communist Party of Indonesia and the Sarikat-Raiat.

After some time, however, the influence of the Sarikat-Islam leaders in the Muhamadiyah began to wane, and a struggle for membership ensued between Muhamadiyah and Sarikat-Raiat (e. g. at Garut). For a long time Muhamadiyah remained more or less a local organisation, but since 1923 it began to expand, and at the present time it has a score of branches in Java and a few branches in Sumatra.

In many towns Muhamadiyah has opened religious schools, hospitals, orphan homes, and asylums for destitute Mohammedans. This organisation has about 10,000 members, mostly wealthy peasants and tradesmen. Muhamadiyah receives from the government and from the native rulers of Jokjakarta and Surakarta an annual subsidy of some tens of thousands of florins, in the shape of grants towards the maintenance of the schools.

Consequently, it can be easily seen that this organisation represents a bulwark of the reformists against the revolutionaries. Obstacles were constantly placed before revolutionary Mohammedans wishing to join this Moslem organisation. It behooves our comrades to try once more to penetrate into this reformist organisation, since — as we have seen — the religious-revolutionary movement has become illegal.

3) „Politisch-Ekonomische Bond“ and the Peasants.

Created in 1917, this conservative party, supported by the sugar capitalists, rapidly grew, and soon captured the majority of the seats in the various government councils (such as „national councils“, „town councils“, „district councils“, etc.). It plays a big part in the parliamentary life of Indonesia. The members of these councils are almost exclusively Dutchmen and superior native government officials.

Since 1922, however, observing the great progress of the revolutionary movement, the leaders of „Politisch-Ekonomische Bond“ decided to carry on activity among the masses of the people. With the aid of native propagandists receiving all manner of encouragement and assistance from the government officials, local branches were formed in many towns and villages under different names, such as „Jamiatul Hasanah“, „Sukalilah“, etc. All these are religious organisations, and

1) In a telegram from Batavia, dated June 21, 1926, it was reported that the emergency congress of Budi-Utomo had rescinded the previous resolution of the Solo congress (concerning the policy of non-cooperation with the government, and the future status as a „public organisation“), but no fresh resolution upon this question was adopted, in spite of prolonged debates.

Evidently, the government, by means of threats, compels its employees and those materially dependent on it (the Budi-Utomo members) to protest against the aforesaid resolution.

at the commencement enrolled tens of thousands of members among the peasants. The capitalists realised quite well the important part played by the Mohammedan religion in the life of the Indonesian people.

But our comrades soon began to carry on propaganda in these organisations. Listening every day to the assertions of the propagandists of the „Politisch-Ekonomische Bond“ about the Koran commandment of „being patient and submitting to authority“, the people realised that these organisations were founded for the purpose of preaching obedience to the oppressors. Thanks also to the propaganda of the Mohammedan revolutionaries, many peasants understood these tactics of the capitalists, and the above-mentioned organisations grew weaker in recent years, many of them ceasing to exist. These organisations, nevertheless, still count about ten thousand peasants on their membership lists. The tactics of the „Politisch-Ekonomische Bond“ have on the whole been defeated; but we must, nevertheless, be on guard against any future attempts of hoodwinking the peasants by means of such organisations.

CHAPTER FIVE.

GOVERNMENT BIDS FOR PEASANT SUPPORT.

The events of recent years have clearly shown that the Indonesian peasants, in alliance with the growing proletariat, constitute a highly important revolutionary factor in the struggle against imperialist capitalism.

Like all the other capitalist governments, the Dutch government realises quite well the need for securing support among the peasants in order to crush the proletarian movement, and to oppress the peasants themselves.

In the second chapter we have already dealt with the efforts of the government in this direction, and we shall therefore touch it only briefly. The government appointed commissions to investigate the burden of taxation upon the native population, and to draw up proposals for the reorganisation of the taxation system. These commissions have in recent years completed their labours, and, among other things, proposed a reduction of direct taxes upon the peasants.¹⁾ But, while reducing the direct taxes, they want to increase the indirect ones that are not directly felt by the peasants. If these proposals will be carried out, there will be perhaps some amelioration in the lot of the peasants, but at any rate, not to a sufficient extent to do away entirely with their discontent, because this ameliorative measure will only be a drop in the ocean.

1) The Indonesian draft budget for 1927, introduced by the government in the „People's Council“, to be subsequently submitted for final approval by the Dutch government, contains the following provisions:

1. Abolition of „padjeg kepala“ (Heerendienst exemption payments) in Java and Madoera.
2. Buying out the so-called „private lands“ (where the peasants are cruelly exploited by the big land-owners) to the maximum value of ten million florins.
3. Irrigation of some districts, including the Southern part of the province of Remban.

But the capitalist government is having recourse also to other means to gain the support of the peasants. Last year it formed peasant cooperative organisations. At first it created them through its agents — the district credit banks (Afdeelings Creditbanken). For instance, the credit bank at Tegal (Central Java) advanced to 500 peasants of the village of Bumijava engaged in the cultivation of coffee, advance loans of 20 florins on account of each pikolei of coffee to be delivered (1 pikolei equals about 61.76 kgm. or 150 lbs.). The peasants undertook to deliver their coffee to the bank, which was to sell it for them. In this manner the bank distributed 1,500 florins, while the coffee delivered amounted to more than 700 pikolei. Each pikolei was realised by the bank at 55 florins; the organisation expenses amounted to 5 florins per pikolei, while the peasants received 30 florins per pikolei in addition to the advance loan. Thus, the peasants got altogether 50 florins for each pikolei of coffee, whereas by selling to the middlemen (usually to the Chinese tradesmen), they would have got only 30 florins per pikolei.

The aforesaid bank now intends to create a similar cooperative organisation among the peasants of the village of Sliavi, who are engaged in the cultivation of „kapok“ (a low grade cotton used for mattress making and upholstery). Hitherto the peasants used to get from the middlemen 2 florins for 1,000 „randu“ (kapok plants). 1,000 randu weigh about 6 katti (1 katti is equal to about 1—1½ lbs.) of kapok, they are therefore getting about 35 florins for 1 pikolei (100 katti). But the Chinese tradesmen are selling the kapok at 95 florins per pikolei, thus getting a profit of about 60 florins per pikolei.

The aim of this bank is to mediate so as to create better conditions for the peasants engaged in the cultivation of kapok.

At the close of 1925 the Indonesian government made yet another bid for support of certain peasant elements. The officials in charge of agricultural education formed productive cooperative organisations for the peasants. In some places, e. g. at Pazet (West Java), they formed on September 1st, 1925, a peasant cooperative organisation for those engaged in growing of vegetables, under the name of „Purva Tani“ (agricultural principle). This organisation is not only for cooperative selling, but also for cooperative growing, so that throughout the year there are sufficient stocks of vegetables to carry out delivery contracts. Each member of Purva Tani must cultivate certain kinds of vegetables on his plot of land of ½ bahu (1 bahu equals 1.75 acres). A plan of cultivation has been worked out by the government officials engaged in this cooperative organisation. The members of the cooperative organisation obtain for their vegetables a price which is approximately 25% higher than the wholesale market prices in the neighbouring town. This amount is to be considered as an advance on account of the profits, since the vegetables are shipped to Batavia where the prices are higher. Attempts were made to divide these profits, but so far they are being converted into capital stock of the said organisation. The government is furnishing this organisation with a temporary subsidy. In June, 1926, Purva Tani took part in a vegetable exhibition which was organised by the government at Sukabumi.

The government, furthermore, intends to create similar co-operative organisations among the peasants engaged in the cultivation of tea and tobacco.

Thus, we see that the Indonesian government is at present making serious bids for peasant support. It is therefore one of the most important duties of every militant communist to get into the peasant organisations, in order to expose the game of their exploiters, which is to alienate the peasant masses from the proletariat, by winning them over to their side.

CHAPTER SIX.

SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK.

From the foregoing it is quite clear that the Indonesian peasants have always been a revolutionary element in the struggle against their oppressors. This is well understood both by the capitalists and by the reformists.

The opinion which the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Indonesia expressed at the 1924 conference, to the effect that the Indonesian peasants were „impotent“ in the political struggle, has been decisively repudiated by the events which have taken place since then.

Although the compromise between the opposition and the Central Committee of the Communist Party did not properly solve this question, the former, nevertheless, fortunately realised the fact that the peasants should be organised not merely on economic lines. The peasant masses of Indonesia, who have always been exploited and oppressed, can only become a revolutionary factor in the political movement. We have seen that the ruling classes take away approximately 50% of the peasants' income and, owing to their backwardness, the peasants, — more so even than the workers, — fall a prey to the usurers, who have been hitherto allowed full play to carry on their nefarious traffic.

It is true that the peasant revolts and strikes and their actions in general, have not produced such tangible results as those of the workers, who have succeeded in gaining better labour conditions. But the Indonesian peasants have nevertheless also been victorious on more than one occasion.

The peasant revolts at Atjeh and Banjarmasin were a costly affair for the government, and their suppression absorbed all the profits which were extorted by means of the „Cultuurstelsel“, which during the latter half of the nineteenth century has virtually failed to yield any revenue to the Dutch government. It was for this reason that the government decided to abolish this system.

We have seen how the struggle of Sarikat Islam, and the peasant insurrections of the Jambi and Tapanuli provinces compelled the Dutch government to agree to the peasants' ransoming themselves from the „Heerendienst“.

Finally, we now see how the struggle of the peasantry united by Sarikat Raiat, — in spite of the white terror, — compelled the government to review its taxation system. All this shows that the peasants have scored certain victories.

An examination of the existing bodies which have any influence upon the peasantry, shows us that neither Sarikat Islam nor the „Poli-

tisch-Ekonomische Bond" have any future as organisations capable of uniting the masses. This is practically the general opinion concerning these two organisations. The futile attempts made by the Sarikat Islam leaders in the last five years to inject some life into their organisation — furnish convincing proof in favour of this opinion. As to the „Politisch-Ekonomische Bond“, even its backers — the sugar capitalists — have become convinced that its game has been played out. A few months back, an article was published in the „Surabaia Commercial Gazette“ in which it was declared that the „Politisch-Ekonomische Bond“ had failed, that it would never succeed in achieving its aim, and that it should be turned into a „Dutch Union“.

In this respect the capitalists are quite right. The political relations in Indonesia are becoming more and more acute. Indonesian society is already now divided into two distinctly hostile camps. „Sin-Po“ (the newspaper of the Chinese nationalists in Indonesia) published an article on March 27th, 1926, in which it was stated that the Chinese — who had hitherto taken up a neutral position in the political struggle between the Indonesian people and the Dutch government — should now take up a clear and definite position, if they did not wish to be crushed between the two hostile camps. The article went on to urge the Chinese residents in Indonesia to help the movement of the Indonesian people.

It is quite clear that, as matters are now standing, the conservative party — i. e. the „Politisch-Ekonomische Bond“ — will not succeed in fooling the masses, in spite of the fact that its central committee has publicly protested against the above-quoted comment of the „Surabaia Commercial Gazette“, and is anxious to enliven its organisation. It will inevitably degenerate into a party of Dutch reactionaries supported by the highest native government officials.

Muhamadiyah is, apparently, a party with a future. The white terror now raging in Indonesia, and the revolutionary Mohammedan movement being illegal, this reformist organisation has many chances of winning over the religious masses of the peasants; it is therefore the duty of our comrades to penetrate into this organisation in order to revolutionise it.

Of all the organisations enumerated above, the brightest future seems to belong to Budi-Utomo. At no time has Budi-Utomo held such big congresses as its last one, which, literally speaking, was in the centre of public attention, and keenly followed by all those who are interested in the political situation in Indonesia. The masses were well represented at that congress. The debates were extremely lively and interesting. There is every reason to anticipate good success for this organisation in the near future.

The Communist Party of Indonesia, Sarikat Raiat and Sarikat Tani have now ceased to be legal parties, — a fact which dictates the necessity of reviewing our tactics to be pursued in the future.

Let us try, however, first of all, to analyse the internal situation in these revolutionary organisations. As we have already said, Sarikat Raiat and Sarikat Tani are closely connected with the Communist Party, and for this reason the tendencies and deviations of the Communist Party exist also in Sarikat Raiat and in Sarikat Tani.

We have already mentioned the fact that there are two strong deviations in the Communist Party — the „populist“ and the left wing.

The „populist“ tendency — of avoiding a division between the proletariat and the peasantry — manifests itself also in the newspapers, where „Raiat“ (the people) is frequently used instead of the words: „workers“ or „peasants“. This deviation is further indicated by the fact that at Termat, situated upon the Molucca archipelago — where the population consists almost entirely of poor peasants and fishermen, and where there are neither mines, factories nor workshops — a local branch of the Communist Party has been in existence since 1921, but there is no Sarikat Raiat.

The left wing deviation is manifested chiefly in the fact that the formation of a Soviet government in Indonesia is being urged as an immediate problem. Moreover, both in the Communist Party and in Sarikat Raiat, very strong anarchist deviations are observable. Many comrades read the works of Bakunin instead of those of Marx; and even the organ of the Communist Party and of Sarikat Raiat at Semeran, „Api“ (fire), frequently quotes from Bakunin, as for instance, its issue of January 8th, 1926.

The religious tendency (of revolutionary Mohammedanism) is particularly strong in the branches at Solo and Padan-Pajan. This tendency manifests itself in the local communist organs of the Mohammedan revolutionaries — „Medan Muslimin“ and „Pemandanan-Islam“.

Finally, there is undoubtedly a very serious syndicalist tendency among some of the leading comrades, a warning against which was voiced by „Niala“ (The Spark).

The above are the principal tendencies in these organisations. Their presence is quite natural for a young party which is rapidly growing. The historic development of the Communist Party and of Sarikat Raiat; the great complexity of the situation in a colony where various movements are engaged in the fight against imperialism; and the white terror which is ever putting greater obstacles before the party, are the main reasons for such tendencies within the party.

There is, however, yet another important factor which stimulates their penetration into the Communist Party of Indonesia; it is of an organisational nature, in that the Sarikat Raiat is so closely connected with the Communist Party. As we have already seen, Sarikat Raiat constitutes the foundation of the Indonesian Communist Party. The Central Committee, the program and the congresses of the Communist Party serve the same purpose for Sarikat Raiat. The Communist Party should not be organisationally placed above Sarikat Raiat, but within Sarikat Raiat; consequently, the latter should have its own program, its own central committee, and its own congresses; while the Communist Party should become the motive power urging it onward to the fight against imperialism.

Although the above-described deviations do not constitute a direct menace of a split in the revolutionary movement in general, and in the ranks of the Communist Party in particular, it is nevertheless absolutely imperative that the Communist Party should be reorganised, in order that it should become in the future a real bolshevist party capable of

leading the revolutionary masses, and of establishing a Workers' and Peasants' Government.

Although Sarikat-Raiat has become an important organisation in Indonesia, it has not, nevertheless, achieved the level of development which it reached in 1916—18. This has been mainly due to the fact that the pressure of the reaction has been much stronger against the Communist Party, Sarikat-Raiat and the red trade unions, than it ever was against Sarikat-Islam. Another important reason is that Sarikat-Raiat, being so closely connected with the Communist Party, has no program of its own, while that of the Communist Party cannot satisfy the oppressed native petty-bourgeoisie. The separation of Sarikat-Raiat from the Communist Party is consequently an essential prerequisite to the growth of the national-revolutionary movement.

It may be asked, what are, then, at present, the concrete prospects for the revolutionary movement in Indonesia, seeing that the Communist Party, Sarikat-Raiat and other revolutionary organisations have been practically driven underground; and what, in particular, are the chances facing the peasant movement?

This is a subject regarding which our observations must be substantially limited, since we do not possess sufficient information as to the latest events in Indonesia. It has already been stated that the Indonesian Communist Party, Sarikat-Raiat and their clandestine supporters are persistently active. Contact with the masses has by no means been severed. The revolutionary movement, in spite of the white terror, is rather progressing. The destitute condition of the people, aggravated by the white terror, has brought about a situation where the revolutionary sentiments of the masses have been stirred to the utmost.

Will there be a stormy outbreak, an outburst of revolt, or will a safe outlet be found, — that we do not know. But the capitalist press of Indonesia appears to be alarmed, and intensely apprehensive, anticipating a general strike or an insurrection. Such are our latest tidings from that country.

At first sight the situation appears to be favourable. But on closer examination, it looks less encouraging. Most of the stalwart fighters are either in exile or in prison, while those left at large — although possessing courage and revolutionary experience — are afflicted with the „infantile disease of Leftism“; neither can they develop any extensive activity, since they are all known to the police and are constantly shadowed by spies. Moreover, owing to the white terror, the organisational links of the party have been considerably loosened, and the influence of the Central Committee on the separate branches is not sufficiently strong: another weighty reason urging the quickest possible reorganisation of the Communist Party and of Sarikat-Raiat.

Will, however, Sarikat-Raiat make more progress after its separation from the Communist Party? With its public meetings banned, will it be able to gather the forces of the revolutionaries and sympathisers that have been scattered by the white terror? With the concentrated forces of the white terror directed against the communists and their

sympathisers, will it be possible to bring back the mass movement to the level of 1916—18?

To all these questions there is but one answer: let a wide and strong national movement be organised! Then the organised masses will either join the Budi-Utomo, or a new party will be created with a clear-cut national-democratic program. This new party, in which our comrades should become the driving force, will eventually lead the other parties into the national fight against the imperialists. In order that the new party might prosper, and gain even more adherents among the peasants than was formerly gained both by Sarikat-Raiat and Sarikat-Islam, its program should be based upon the interests of the peasantry, and contain specific points covering the demands of the poor and middle peasants. One of the most essential tasks for our comrades is to thoroughly study the interests and the demands of the peasants. The Indonesian peasants, after the experience they have gained in Sarikat-Islam and then Sarikat-Raiat, will not be content now with a mere economic organisation. Therefore, the new national-democratic party should devote particular attention to the peasantry, so that the peasants might not be hoodwinked either by the government organisations or by those of the moderate nationalists; so that the peasants might give their support to the proletariat, and not to the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Then, we ought to pay our attention to the formation of such peasant organisations as will offer immediate material advantages to the peasants; such as producers' and consumers' co-operative organisations. Under the present circumstances, when the revolutionary movement has been driven underground, and there is extreme economic distress among the peasants, there is a great future in store for such co-operative organisations. This, as we have seen, has been fully realised by the government and by Budi-Utomo as well as by the central committee of the Indonesian Communist Party, as attested by opinions expressed at the December conference of 1924. They are all aware of the fact that cooperation is one of the most efficacious means of gaining the support of the peasantry. Our comrades should not only create and lead the peasant cooperative organisations, but should also penetrate into the cooperative organisations that are influenced either by the government or by other political parties, in order to expose the capitalist fraud, to carry on a propaganda campaign against the imperialist war menace, for the emancipation of the peasantry, and for the establishment of a Workers' and Peasants' Government.

Such, we believe, are for the immediate future the fundamental prospects of the Indonesian revolutionary movement in general, and of the peasant movement in particular. Great influence upon the development of the movement will no doubt be exercised by the march of national and international events.

The Farmers' International (Krestintern), which has hitherto been but in feeble contact with the peasant movement in that far-away country, will — it is to be hoped — from now on exercise greater influence upon the development of the peasant movement in Indonesia, thus speeding on the cause of the peasants and the workers throughout the world, in the fight against their common foe.

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